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**Cultural Transfers in
Early Monsoon Asia**

**Edited by Andrea Acri, Roger
Blench, Alexandra Landmann**

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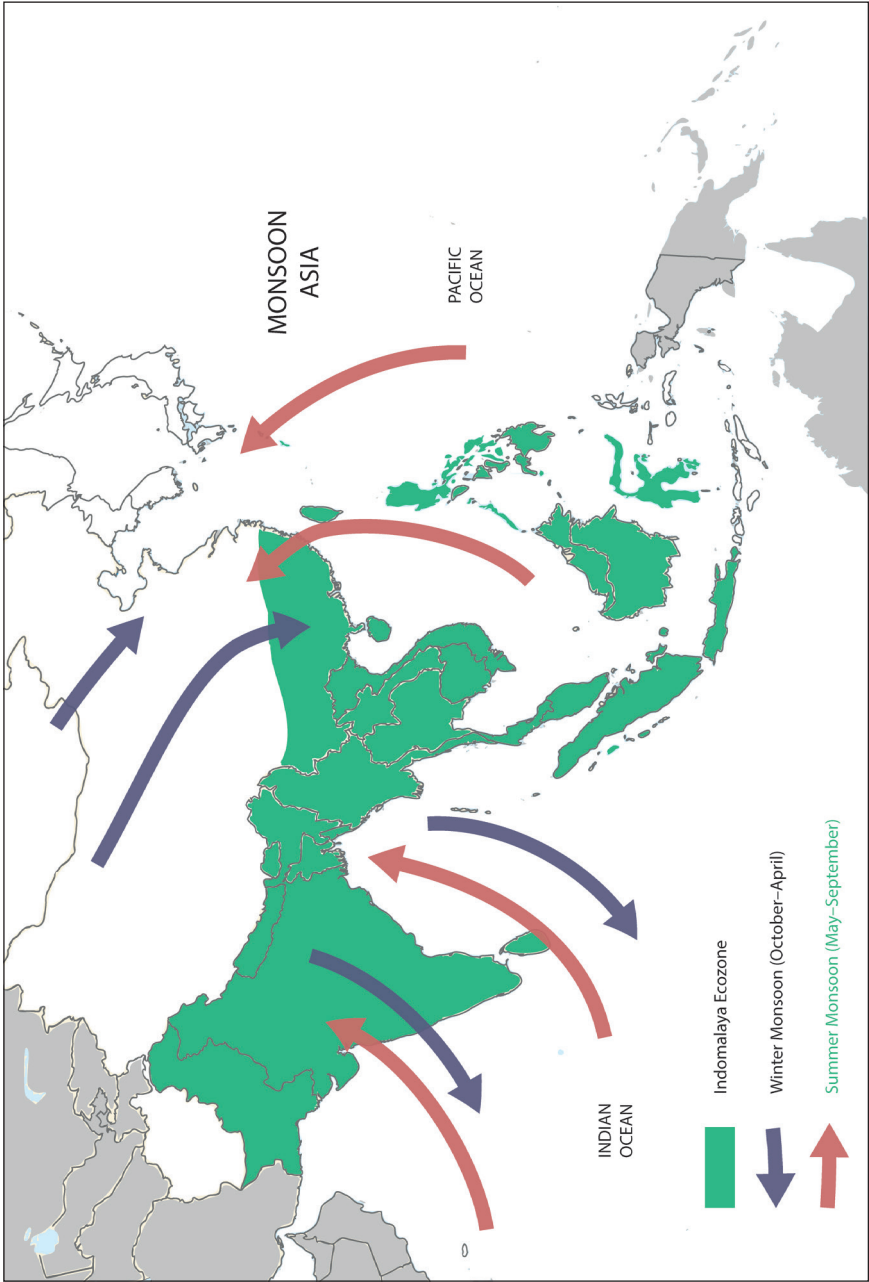
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Map of Monsoon Asia

Source: Courtesy of Andrea Aciri (modified from file Asie.svg, by user Gerge, via Wikimedia Commons, <<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Asie-color.svg>>).

1

INTRODUCTION

Re-connecting Histories across the Indo-Pacific

Andrea Acri, Roger Blench, Alexandra Landmann

1. Origin of This Volume

This volume is the result of a collaborative project that culminated in the conference “Cultural Transfer in Early Monsoon Asia: Austronesian-Indic Encounters”, organized by Andrea Acri and Alexandra Landmann in December 2013 at the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute.¹ The event brought together fourteen scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds and regional expertise, in the attempt to provide the widest possible framework to synthesize and (re-)assess the broad subject under investigation. Besides providing a venue for dialogue

¹ Although Roger Blench was not able to make it to the meeting in Singapore, he was invited to join the editorial committee in view of his multidisciplinary experience in the field.

between various disciplines, it has aimed to (re-)focus scholarly attention on cultural phenomena side-by-side with linguistics, archaeology, and genetics.

Conceptually, the conference sought to foreground a “borderless” history and geography of South, Southeast and East Asian littoral zones that would be maritime-focused, and thereby explore the ancient connections and dynamics of interaction that favoured fruitful “encounters” among the cultures found throughout the region stretching from the Indian Ocean littorals to the Western Pacific, from the early historical period to the present. A hallmark of its intellectual framework has been to transcend the artificial spatial demarcations and imagined boundaries of macro-regions and nation-states, as well as to bridge the arbitrary divide between (inherently cosmopolitan) “high” cultures (e.g. Sanskritic, Sinitic, or Islamicate) and “local” or “indigenous” cultures. Indeed, many “local” small-scale societies and cosmopolitan cultures in the region stretching from Eastern India and Southeast Asia to China and Japan were already plural from the earliest times, yet retain some remarkable common features, such as wet-rice monoculture and houses on stilts (Abalahin 2011, p. 661). Religion, too, shows common forms, in terms of dual organization and a focus on an ancestor cult, often vaguely defined as “shamanic” or “animist” (Reuter 2014). Remarkably similar head-hunting and burial practices characterize the religion of Nāga tribes of Eastern India, as well as the past religions of some Tibeto-Burman and Austroasiatic-speaking ethnic groups settled in Myanmar, and might have been once widespread in maritime Southeast Asia, Taiwan, and the whole of Oceania (Brighenti 2009, p. 92; Hutton 1928, pp. 406–7). A shared core of cultural identity or *Weltanschauung* across Southeast Asia and Melanesia includes narratives of multiple origins, the importance of precedence, clan and social binding systems, small-scale societies, autonomy for women, and a specific close interconnection of spatial, social and religious differentiation marking centre and periphery. Many authors (see reviews in Fox 1993; Bellwood, Fox and Tryon 1995; Fox and Sather 1996) have noted the persistence of dualism, i.e. culturally defined oppositions that include poetry, house-form, clan structures and much else. Ironically, these dichotomies appear to reflect models proposed by

Levi-Strauss more closely than the Amazonian societies he chose to study.

One of the main hypotheses discussed in the forum is that despite the rich ethnic, linguistic and sociocultural diversity, a shared pattern of values, norms and cultural models occurs throughout Monsoon Asia—a vast geographical area inhabited by speakers of numerous language phyla, where the circulatory dynamics of cultural transfer, interaction, acceptance, selection and avoidance can be discerned. For millennia, this region has been an integrated system of littorals where crops, goods, ideas, cosmologies and ritual practices circulated along the sea-routes governed by the seasonal monsoon winds. Some of the questions asked during the forum included: what were the translocal cultural dynamics before (and beyond) “Indianization”? What were the flows and interactions across the Indo-Pacific area? Did a common cultural matrix exist in the region stretching from the Bay of Bengal to the Western Pacific? Can we reconstruct an early shared matrix or common source for widespread cultural traits that we observe empirically today throughout the region?

Adhering to the spirit of the intellectual enquiry informing the conference, this multidisciplinary volume encourages both an “oceanic turn” and a *longue durée* approach to the study of the fluid and complex translocal dynamics governing historical processes that transcend the boundaries of both nation-states and macro-regions as they are commonly framed in the Area Studies paradigm. In focusing on Monsoon Asia, we encourage a widening of the geo-historical framework through which cultural phenomena linked by a shared history going back to a remote past are to be investigated. In so doing, we advocate a change of paradigm in studying the cultural exchanges between premodern South Asia, Southeast Asia, and East Asia—as if those concepts were actual distinctive entities, with intrinsic, clear-cut and enduring geographical and ethno-linguistic boundaries—as well as a disciplinary de-parochialization. At any rate, it is important to remind us that the Area Studies segregation of region-bound separate and self-contained fields of study is a modern construct. It creates imagined boundaries and, as rightly noted by Ali (2009, p. 11), obscures rather than reveals:

When speaking about pre-modern cultural interactions... the ways we conceptualise these often has as much to do with the ‘onward historical developments’ which culminated in the formation of modern nationalism as with the cultural, economical and political flows which traversed the pre-colonial world.

Our perspective posits the occurrence of circulatory dynamics of globalization and diverse intercontinental, cross-cultural human relations that have configured trajectories of the existing cultural patterns in the area. These were formed and accommodated in prehistoric and early historical times, and constitute processual continuities that are still being negotiated in the modern period. By focusing on agency, interaction, and multi-directional transfer, our perspective aims at avoiding both essentialism and extreme fragmentation, thereby achieving greater depth in historical analysis.

2. (Re-)connected Histories: Conceptualizing Monsoon Asia

Kauz (2010, p. 1) highlights the interconnected and cosmopolitan nature of the premodern Indian Ocean trade network, noting that it has emerged as a “largely coherent structure, and has been a space which served as a huge stratum connecting the various kingdoms and cultures adjacent to it, causing interchanges in all possible fields and certainly mutual influences”. Asking whether the history of the civilizations around and beyond the Indian Ocean exhibits any intrinsic and perceptible unity, expressed in terms of space, time, or structures, Chaudhuri has found “a basic underlying structure, the ground floor of material life, which remained invariant while displaying variations within certain limits” (1993, pp. 1, 7). Andre G. Frank (1998) has considered the Indian Ocean area as extending to the South China Sea, and as having been central in global history for at least five millennia up to about 1800.

Starting from these ocean-focused premises we imagine Monsoon Asia as a vast geographical, historical, and environmental space characterized by great variation and, at the same time, an underlying unity. From a geographical perspective, this space may be conceptualized as the belt of territory spanning from the eastern shores of the Indian Subcontinent

(and their hinterlands) in the west to the South China Sea, the Philippine islands and Papua New Guinea in the west.² Its fulcrums are the littorals of peninsular and mainland Southeast Asia, and what is now the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago or Nusantara. Cutting across the natural boundaries and barriers of continental topography as well as the political borders of modern nation states, and transcending such constructed geographical divisions as South/Southeast/East Asia, this largely maritime expanse—which encompasses the environmental region of the “Indo-Pacific” and the “Indomalaya ecozone”—was influenced by environmental and climatic factors, such as the seasonal monsoon winds. Monsoon Asia can be theorized as an environmentally unified space and also as an interconnected and integrated network that—just like Eurasia (Lewis and Wigen 1997, p. 143)—presents the characteristics of a cultural ecumene. What Reynolds (2006, p. x) calls “the geoenvironmental metaphor of Monsoon Asia” could be translated into a “human-environmental metaphor” indeed, which here is offered as an heuristic device for the purpose of suggesting a commonality of cultural traits and epistemes against the background of millennia of human interaction—or, to say it with Abalahin (2011, p. 664), to frame “a series of world-historical developments that bring together histories that have customarily been viewed apart”.

Monsoon Asia, by virtue of its maritime corridors, formed a natural space that favoured the long-distance movement of people, commodities, languages and ideas across the Indian and the Western Pacific Oceans. While a great deal of scholarly attention has been traditionally devoted to the phenomenon of “Indianization” of Southeast Asia, the past two or three decades have witnessed intensive archaeological research into its early history, which has resulted in the formulation of new paradigms in the study of South and Southeast Asian exchanges (Bellina 2002, 2003; Smith 1999; Theunissen, Grave and Bailey 2000). These paradigms are taken by Gupta (2005) as the basis for conceptualizing

² If we strictly apply geoenvironmental criteria, and at the same time take into account historical and ethnolinguistic factors, Korea and Japan would belong to Monsoon Asia as its “appendices” or “edges”.

the Bay of Bengal as an “Interaction Sphere” in the period from 1000 BC to 500 AD. Abalahin (2011), discussing the non-Sinitic, i.e. (proto-) Austronesian identity in the pre- and proto-historic periods of what we now call “China”, has connected—and at the same time dissolved—early Southeast Asia and Inner/North/East Asia into the macro-region called “Sino-Pacific”. Using these innovative models as sources of inspiration, the collective body of work presented here intends to emphasize processes of cultural exchange and integration, and to raise the question as to whether these dynamics may have extended to an even wider geographical area over a longer period of time. By taking the “early” as our main chronological frame, we focus on the crucial transitional proto-historic period from 1500 BC to 500 AD, while at the same time taking into account earlier periods that paved the way for later historical developments, as well as modern phenomena that may give us a key to access and reconstruct an older layer of resilient cultural frameworks.

The idea of an interconnected and integral Monsoon Asia is not new. As pointed out by Yule and Rath (2000, quoted in Gupta 2005, p. 22), already in the 1920s, “eastern India came into the spotlight of world archaeology as the westernmost link in a complex of prehistoric cross-cultural relations which extended as far east as Japan”. At the same time, French scholars like Paul Mus, Sylvain Lévi, Jean Przyluski and George Coedès—whose studies at a later date inspired the proponents of the Greater India perspective—hypothesized the existence of a cultural substrate, labelled “Austroasiatic” or “Austrie”, common to South, Southeast, and parts of East Asia. An “Austroasiatic culture” that included ancestor worship and funerary practices, matrilineal dualism, and structural analogies of myths was inferred on the basis of evidence from linguistic, mythology, art history, and archaeology. Mus (1975, pp. 8–9 [1933]) posited the “existence in ancient times of a certain unity of culture throughout an extensive zone in which India, Indo-China, Indonesia, a Pacific islands fringe and doubtless southern China are to be united”. Further, Mus rightly emphasized the “borderless” character of long-distance cultural transfer in Monsoon Asia, favoured by its unique maritime geography:

The wide distribution over the surface of the globe of the regions I have just mentioned is not as absolute a barrier as you might be tempted to believe at first. For too long, ethnography has proceeded by purely continental groupings.... A hundred, two hundred or a thousand kilometres of sea, especially where there are prevailing winds, are a distance much less considerable than a hundred, two hundred or a thousand kilometres of land, divided by mountains, forests and hostile tribes... whenever sea lanes establish communication, it is reasonable to expect a cultural unity, and it makes more sense to speak of a religion of the monsoon zone of Asia than to speak of Indian religion, or Chinese religion, prior to the civilizations which were later to give meaning to these words.

Following Mus' idea of Monsoon Asia as an integrated cultural zone, Coedès (1968, p. 15) espoused an analogous perspective by stating that Southeast Asian people were “endowed with a civilization that had traits in common with the civilization of pre-Aryan India”, and that there existed, “under an Indian veneer, a base common to all of monsoon Asia”, which made the spread of Indic cultural elements throughout Southeast Asia so quick and productive.

The rise of post-WWII Area Studies paradigm reflecting current geopolitical trends relegated the approach of the earlier generation of scholars to an intellectual dustbin. Attempts to revive the Monsoon Asia perspective have remained sporadic and isolated at best; these include, e.g., Ian Mabbett's (1977*a*, 1977*b*) idea that “Indianization of Southeast Asia” is a “confusion of categories”, suggesting as it does that South and Southeast Asia already shared common socio-cultural traits before “Indianization”; Chihara's (1996, p. 7) hypothesis concerning a “substratum of pre-Aryan culture” shared between India and Southeast Asia, which made it easy for the waves of Indianization to penetrate Southeast Asian societies “as if by osmosis”; and the case-studies by Emigh (1996), Jordaan and Wessing (1996, 1999), and Dentan (2002*a*, 2002*b*, this volume), which have attempted to unravel the intricate relationship between “Indic” and “autochthonous” phenomena (and their ultimate origin) from a wider-ranging Monsoon Asia perspective (see Acri, this volume).

As a reaction to the “Indianization” or “Greater India” paradigm in vogue around the first half of the twentieth century, which stressed the civilizing role of India and West–East dynamics of transfer, the Area Studies paradigm has insisted on Southeast Asian agency in regional “localizations” of Indic phenomena. This perspective is the hallmark of the influential model proposed by Wolters (1999 [1982]), who took into account the Southeast Asian region as a “broadly based community of outlook”, or a distinctive “mosaic of literary cultures characterised by foreign and local features fitting into various text-like wholes” (p. 65). While we recognize Wolters’ masterful contribution to the field of Southeast Asian studies, his characteristic focus on literacy does not do full justice to the concept of “cultural matrix”: whatever was responsible for the unity of the Southeast Asian area, it was certainly not a relatively late external factor such as literacy.

Some scholars attempted to refine the theoretical parameters of both extremes adding a new element of complexity. For instance, de Casparis (1983) put the emphasis on the fact that this process of cultural exchange was hitherto analysed in too simplistic a way, implying on the contrary “a complicated network of relations, both between various parts of each of the two great regions and between the two regions themselves” (*ibid.*, pp. 18–19). He further considered that in analysing the phenomenon of Indianization one could hardly avoid focusing on either India or Southeast Asia, implying that one area “gave” and the other “received”, whereas the picture is much more complicated by the mosaic of different cultures which characterized both regions (*ibid.*, p. 2). Kulke (1990) suggested an (independent) socio-cultural “convergence”. Calling India and Southeast Asia “partners of mutual ‘processes of civilisation’ which comprised both sides of the Bay of Bengal”, Kulke (2014, p. 10) posits a socio-economic and political convergence in both regions during the early centuries AD that enabled similar solutions to similar problems of social change.

A recent trend in contemporary scholarship has been the emphasis on cosmopolitan phenomena. Such is the case of the “Sanskrit Cosmopolis” model advanced by Pollock (1996, 2006), which has developed a critique of the “civilizationalist indigenism” of Wolters and any “defensive indigenist” approaches that see an undeterminable cultural matrix in

Southeast Asia, i.e. an *echt* “Southeast Asianness”. However, Pollock’s model is limited to Sanskrit and “Cosmopolitan vernacular” languages and literatures, and therefore biased towards high cultural, top-down phenomena; the supralocal dynamics shaping bottom-up phenomena that do not fit the model, such as e.g. magic, folk religion, ritual, and performances remain largely to be investigated. As noted by Ali (2009, p. 16), “the full implications of Pollock’s theory have yet to be explored and may still help us reconceptualize the nature of linkages between South and Southeast Asia in ways perhaps consonant with Kulke’s suggestive remarks”. One cannot but agree with Lombard’s (1995, p. 15) hope that one day the historical reconstructions made by archaeologists, linguists, geneticists, and scholars of culture “will give way to a true consideration of synchronisms, that is to say to a comparative theory, which will examine parallels between the evolutionary paths of the different ‘layers’ or ‘sectors’”. (Lombard was a follower of Heine-Geldern (1932*a*), for whom the synchronisms of the Dongsonian period and its bronze drums and the so-called “Indianized” period, characterized by state formation and dissemination of the Indian script and Sanskrit languages, seemed significant, although we now know this was a chronological accident.) This perspective may be compared to Lieberman’s (2009) “strange parallels”, i.e. synchronous developments between geographically distant regions in Southeast Asia and the wider Eurasian area.

It is worth commenting here on the significance of bronze drums, since they are so widely—yet unwarrantedly—cited by so many authors as somehow typical of the Southeast Asian region and the period of “Indianization”. The most recent summary of the archaeology and ethnography of bronze drums is Calò (2014). The drums, which were manufactured in workshops in Northern Vietnam and possibly adjacent Laos from 400 BC onwards, were traded widely across the region for nearly a millennium. A radically different type, the *moko*, began to be manufactured and spread in Indonesia from 600 AD (see Figure 1.1). We have no idea who the makers of the drums were and why this particular object was so widely diffused. Other products of the Dongson culture, such as the daggers and the bronze vessels, largely stayed on the mainland. In later periods, the bossed gong, originally from China,

FIGURE 1.1**Moko and Classical Bronze Drum**

Source: Roger Blench.

replaced the bronze drum. Bronze drums are rich markers of early trade routes, but in the end cannot be regarded as being characteristic of the Southeast Asian region.

In a recent appraisal of the dynamics of early interactions and cross-cultural exchange between South and Southeast Asia, Manguin (2011, p. xx) argues that the “relationship between Southeast Asian and Indian societies had already come a very long way” before the first Indian-inspired archaeological, linguistic and cultural vestiges begin to appear between the third and fifth century CE. This fact prompted him to formulate the question, was Southeast Asia Indianized before Indianization? If so, the preceding period “would then only be considered as a contact and exchange phase with South Asia, allowing for a variety of comparable but variable processes at play”. While this formulation shifts the chronological parameters of the issue at stake, it does not introduce a substantial change in the theoretical framework. Whether the “comparable processes” constituted independent developments, as in Kulke’s “convergence” theory, or stemmed from an early common source or civilizational configuration, as in the “Monsoon Asia” paradigm, remains to be investigated.

3. The Genesis of Early Seafaring in the Southeast Asian Region

Much of the historical writing on Southeast Asia has failed to read the literature on the prehistory of the region. Archaeology has now demonstrated that the maritime history of Southeast Asia is virtually coincident with the earliest human settlement of the region. Australia was settled from Timor around 55,000 BP, a voyage which cannot be explained as accidental drift (O’Connor 2003). Burials on the islands of the Ryukyus, the chain stretching north of Taiwan to Southern Japan, indicate inter-island traffic as early as 35,000 BP (Pearson 2014). Bednarik (2003) reviews the evidence for inter-island voyaging in island Southeast Asia in the Pleistocene, as well as attempting to reproduce a possible vessel of the period and test its feasibility. Bulbeck (2008) has shown that inter-island transfers of trade goods in island Southeast Asia long predate the Neolithic. Regrettably, we do not know the

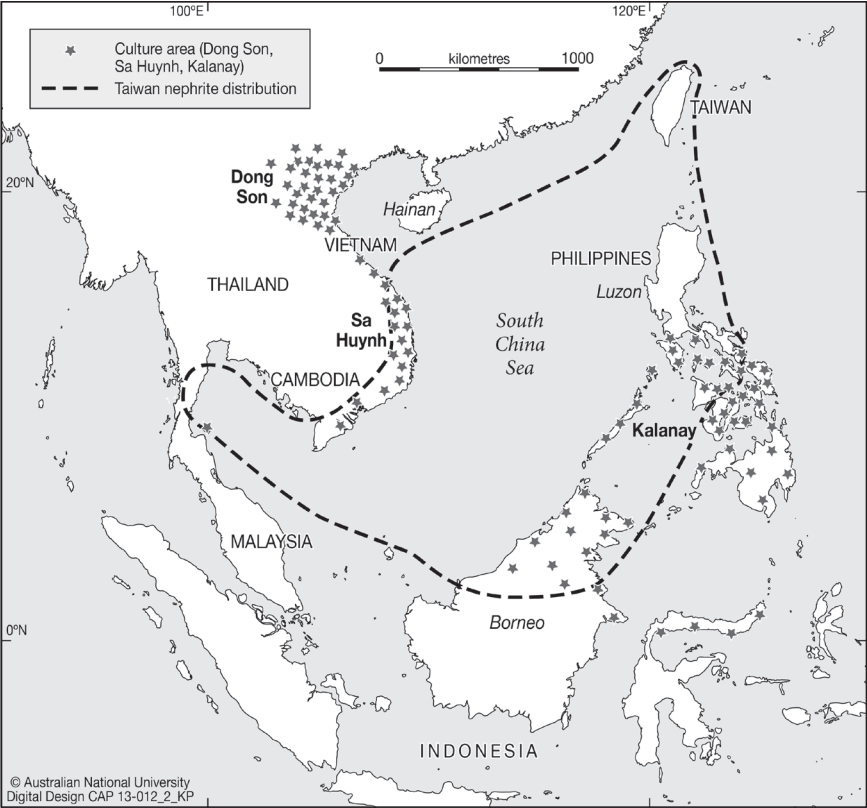
identity of these early voyagers, nor what languages they spoke or the types of watercraft they used. But we can say that the dramatic expansion of sea-voyaging following the Austronesian dispersal had antecedents in deep antiquity (Mahdi, this volume).

After 4,000 BP it can be fairly said there was a revolution in ship construction that made possible long distance and large-scale inter-island traffic (Bellwood 1995, 2007). Neolithic sites in island Southeast Asia multiply rapidly and by 3,500 BP, the Austronesians have reached the Marianas, some 3,500 km east of the Philippines. The first archaeologist to point to similarities around the South China Sea indicating early maritime contact was Solheim (1957) who identified the remarkable Kulanay complex which joins the Philippines with the Southeast Asian mainland. Solheim (1984–85) later went on to model the similarities defining the Austronesian culture area as the “Nusantao”. Although this model has been quite influential, Solheim never really engaged with the linguistic data, in contrast to Bellwood, and his concept of Austronesian as a trade language is no longer considered viable.

With these skills, trade goods, such as nephrite from Taiwan, began to diffuse throughout the whole Southeast Asian area, both mainland and islands (Hung et al. 2013). The advantage of archaeology over vague speculation is that the geography of finds can provide concrete evidence for both shared cultural elements and chronology. From the distribution of shared ceramic types and motifs, we can see how improved maritime skills stimulated a web of connections across the South China Sea from 3,500 BP onwards (see Figure 1.2). Only later do Dongson artefacts enter the record, spreading out from workshops in what is now Vietnam. Such maps provide graphic evidence for the complete independence between the evolution of a Southeast Asian shared culture and the later impact of Indianization.

Parallel developments were taking place on the mainland at exactly this period. A revised chronology using direct dates from a sample major of sites from Southeast Asia (Higham et al. 2011) has indicated the Southeast Asian mainland Neolithic was confined to a small window, from

FIGURE 1.2



Kalanay and Dongson Culture Areas

Source: Adapted from Hung et al. (2013)

3,800–4,100 BP. It is difficult not to associate this with the dispersal of Austroasiatic (cf. arguments in Sidwell and Blench 2011) and possibly also Tai-Kadai languages. Austroasiatic at least seems to have been an aquatic dispersal, driven by improved rivercraft, following the main watersheds of the region.

A consequence of this period of parallel expansions is a “community of culture”. Austronesian in particular is characterized by a raft of common cultural features, which can be identified from Taiwan to New Zealand (Bellwood et al. 1995). Austroasiatic societies and cultures are more

diverse, presumably due to their fragmentation caused by subsequent incursions from speakers of Tai-Kadai and Sino-Tibetan languages. Even so, the significance of improved boats in exploring the inland waterways of mainland Southeast Asia created a similarly rapid expansion. The intense circulation of ideas in parallel with material culture goes a long way towards explaining the consensus culture which characterized the region long before the arrival of the first ships from South Asia.

A second maritime revolution seems to have occurred with the evolution of new ship types (Manguin 1993). Moving away from simple boats to larger outriggers constructed with nails meant that much larger cargoes and crews could ply regular routes. Figure 1.3 neatly illustrates this transition, showing the contrast between the flimsy construction of earlier boats (left) compared with the large trade ships (right) in the friezes at Borobudur (eighth/ninth century AD).

FIGURE 1.3



Two Types of Boat Shown at Borobudur

Source: Andrea Acri.

This period sees the genesis of the Srivijaya thalassocracy which begins to move trade goods, ideas and languages around the region. The frontiers of exploration reach as far as the east coast of Africa westwards and to Papua in the east. The multilingual crews that reached East Africa and went on to colonize Madagascar (Adelaar, this volume) mark the entry of Southeast Asia into the world system, pioneering the trans-Indian Ocean trade (Blench 2010).

South Asian contact had begun prior to 0 AD, but with a strong focus on religion, and with impacts typically on architecture and iconography. There is very little evidence for technological transfers, and it seems that shipbuilding techniques were most likely indigenous to the region. What can be said is that the pre-existing networks of the region were already adapted to the pioneering of new trade routes, and for this reason there were significant transfers of crops and maritime technology to South Asia (Mahdi 1999). The imbalanced picture presented by scholars focusing on writing and stone architecture is gradually being rectified as archaeology and cultural analysis demonstrates ever more clearly the existence of two-way traffic.

4. The Contribution of Linguistics

Linguistic data has shed new light on cultural contact in the Indian Ocean from the mid-second millennium BCE. The online Austronesian Comparative Dictionary of Blust³ reconstructs over 5,000 forms and is accompanied by an interpretative commentary, providing a resource unequalled even in Indo-European for understanding regional history. The advanced knowledge of seafaring testified to by numerous nautical terms in Malayo-Polynesian languages from Malaysia to Hawaii suggests the existence of reconstructible forms in proto-Malayo-Polynesian (Pawley and Pawley 1994). While there is increasing evidence of the traces left by Southeast Asian seafarers on the Western Indian Ocean shores (Blench 2010), the impact of Southeast Asia on India remains

³ URL: <<http://www.trussel2.com/acd/>> (accessed 20 September 2015).

poorly understood, in terms of the dispersal of cultigens, languages, and ideas. Mahdi (1999) is one of the few scholars to discuss this topic in detail. Connections can be discerned along two quite distinct routes, the sea-routes to the east coast of mainland South Asia and the overland trade routes passing through Yunnan into the valley of the Brahmaputra. Potential links include megalithic traditions and cultural practices of the northeastern region of the Indian Subcontinent and Southeast Asia (ibid., p. 4). For example, it has recently been discovered that the rice domesticated in India (*Oryza sativa* var. *indica*) was subject to early introgression with the *japonica* varieties domesticated in East Asia (Castillo et al. 2015). This can only have occurred in the corridor linking China to the valley of the Brahmaputra via Yunnan. There can be little doubt the Austroasiatic-speaking Munda peoples, who arrived in the northeastern region of the Indian Subcontinent from Southeast Asia with a fully-realized agricultural package, played a major role in this meeting of traditions.

The ever-increasing body of linguistic, genetic and archaeological evidence unearthed in the past two decades can tell us much about the origin and dispersal of population across the Indo-Pacific (Lansing et al. 2011). There is little doubt the Austronesians originated in Taiwan, although their ancestral source was clearly the Chinese mainland. What remains controversial is whether this was a demographic expansion driven by agriculture (the Bellwood model) or rather a seaborne dispersal motivated by trade and the quest for aquatic resources (Bulbeck 2008; Blench 2012b). Recent dates for the Neolithic of island Southeast Asia point ever more strongly to a very rapid expansion favouring the second interpretation (Spriggs 2011). Genetics indicates that the “Asian” component in western Island Southeast Asia is overwhelming and Lansing et al. (2011) provide a useful model of how marriage patterns and cultural dominance all but eliminated the traces of pre-existing resident populations.

On the mainland, there was a meeting of four major language phyla. An important chapter in this saga is the debate over whether a “Neolithic package” of rice cultivation was superimposed on a substrate of vegeticulturalists (van Driem 2001, pp. 324–7, 2012; Diffloth 2005; Ferlus 2010). The core language group in the region is evidently

Austroasiatic, spreading both along the Mekong and parallel watersheds westwards, as well as down the Thai Peninsular and on to the Nicobar Islands (Sidwell and Blench 2011). However, as the map shows all too clearly, Austroasiatic has been fragmented by the subsequent southward spread of Sino-Tibetan and Tai-Kadai languages (Blench 2011*b*, 2013*a*). The homeland of Sino-Tibetan is disputed, but the broad consensus is that it must have been in the west, Nepal, Bhutan and Northeast India, where the diversity is greatest (Blench 2014*a*). The dispersal eastwards seems to have occurred multiple times; isolated languages such as Tujia and Bai testify to these early movements. The ancestors of the Chinese apparently moved to North China, where they picked up millet and other cold weather crops from the resident Altaic speakers. It is likely that they subsequently moved south to the valley of the Yangtse, displacing the resident Hmong-Mien speakers. Rice is domesticated (as opposed to the management of wild rice) at about 6,500 BP and it becomes a core cultural concept of Sinitic society, fuelling the massive demographic increase which allowed the Han to dominate a vast geographical region.

5. Cosmopolitanism *vis-à-vis* Indigenism

Area Studies scholars, ethnographers, historians and philologists in the past fifty years or so have tended to analyse Southeast Asian cultural phenomena in terms of a synthesis or hybridization between foreign elements/influences and “local” or “indigenous” phenomena. The former have been regarded as intrinsically cosmopolitan, whereas the latter as intrinsically embedded or vernacular. Thus, elements of the Indic/Sanskritic, Sinitic, and Islamicate high culture would have been localized along the prevalent place-specific socio-cultural and linguistic coordinates. Even when a higher degree of agency and dynamism is accorded to the pre-existing civilizations of Southeast Asia, those civilizational configurations are too often only vaguely defined through such self-explanatory labels as “local” or “indigenous”—without a clear definition of what is to be understood as local or indigenous. For example, to describe Southeast Asian varieties of imported religions and their mixture of Indic (or Sinitic) elements and pre-existing indigenous

(e.g. “shamanic” or “animist”) cultural features, such vague notions as “hybrid”, “assimilated”, or “syncretic” are often invoked, yet hardly ever explained. No detailed comparative research has unravelled whether there had been or not a common civilizational configuration prior to “Indianization”, and what the features of such a civilizational configuration might have been.

The concept of “local genius” has been popular among Indonesianists, and especially art historians, who generally speak of an “indigenous Indonesian spirit” (Holt 1967, p. 29); yet, it is not entirely clear in what exactly this indigenous spirit consists of, and where its “local” boundaries lay. Edi Sedyawati, when referring to premodern Central Javanese dance, rightly notes that “the adjective ‘local’ and ‘indigenous’ are ambiguous terms used to denote anything which does not belong to ‘standard’ classical Hindu (*sic*) dance style” (1982). Similar considerations can be made with respect to religious ideas and practices, which are often deemed to be “local” but may in fact be part of a shared heritage that circulated through networks of folk practitioners—or what scholarship has tended to call “shamans” (see Acri 2014). In short, we feel that there is a need to realize that features that are often perceived as local or indigenous have turned out to be the product of circulatory dynamics, whereby local developments took place against the background of translocal exchanges. In other words, the “local” was already, at least in part, “cosmopolitan”: compare Pollock’s concept of “Cosmopolitan vernacular”. This is the case, for instance, of the “Austronesian cultural package” that seafaring voyagers spread as they gradually settled through Southeast Asia, and which eventually was localized.

The last two decades have witnessed the emergence of a focus on a linguistically and archeologically defined Austronesian shared background of the people inhabiting mainland and insular Southeast Asia, as well as Oceania. New findings from genetics and physical anthropology, point to a more nuanced model of migration. A combined approach to reconstruct the history and evolution of ideas that integrates and moves beyond linguistics, archaeology, and genetics, could produce and connect new insights by delving into the hitherto little explored domains of production and transfer of knowledge, mythologies,

ancestral legal systems and religious beliefs, as well as aspects of material culture such as trade, navigation technology, etc.

Fox (2006, p. 1 [1996]) lamented a “localization” of interests and disciplinary/areal parochialization reflected in current academe. Going against this trend, Bellwood, Fox and colleagues, in many publications stemming from the “Comparative Austronesian Project”, have drawn together different disciplinary approaches for the study of the Austronesian-speaking populations and to elaborate a general framework for the interpretation of the complexities of the Austronesian heritage across Southeast Asia and the Pacific Ocean. They have compared features traceable to a common heritage beyond language despite millennia of interaction and change, namely a “Southern Mongoloid” genetic ancestry for Austronesian-speakers. These include widespread cultural features such as tattooing, use of outriggers on canoes, features of ethnographic and prehistoric art styles, and social norms concerning siblings’ rank and a reverence for ancestral kin group founders (Fox 2006, p. 6). In spite of these common features, however, “there is little which can be characterised as exclusively and uniquely Austronesian held widely today in common among all the Austronesian-speaking regions” (2006, p. 3). This state of affairs suggests that a polythetic approach is needed to evaluate the complex issue of origin, dispersal, and transformation of the “Austronesians” and their “cultural package(s)” through millennia (see Landmann, this volume).

In the short manifesto “Towards an integrated comparative study of Austronesian Cultures”, Edi Sedyawati (2011, pp. 54–5) has noted that by comparing cultures and their respective culture bearers it would be possible to discern whether they are related, and therefore presumably share the same origin. Blench (2012*b*, p. 135), discussing the pervasive and highly distinctive set of iconographic elements in figurative art that is widely spread across the Austronesian-speaking areas, argues that this strongly religion-associated imagery may be “a manifestation of *adat*, the traditional religion of I[sland] S[outh] E[ast] A[sia] prior to the spread of world religions”. The curious irony is that this type of regional cultural comparison is the major feature of what is now considered outmoded or bypassed *Kulturkreislehre*, the typical pattern of North European ethnology from about 1890 to the 1950s. The careful

mapping of comparable features of culture was typical of this period and monographs such as Speiser's (1923) work on Vanuatu illustrate the value of these approaches. The authors of these studies had no archaeological chronology to guide them and were hobbled by interpretations which emphasized cultural "layers". Nonetheless, the comparative side of their work could well be emulated by modern scholars concerned with the identification of a common Austronesian cultural core.

6. Where Do We Stand?

Monsoon Asia constitutes a geographical arena with a shared, millennia-long history of migration of people, long-distance trade, linguistic contact and dispersal, and cultural transfer. Gupta (2005, p. 21) distinguishes interactive, long-distance "processes of human dispersals and technological diffusions (including the Neolithic expansion from southern China into Southeast Asia) and short term movements of men and material inspired by trade opportunities", arguing that the latter were usually effected through conduits opened by earlier expansions. More evidence of prehistoric contacts between South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia has turned up in recent years. The presence of jar burials along the Indo-Pacific arc suggests the possibility of interactivity and sharing of religious ideas and practices from East to South Asia, while studies on the distribution of ceramics, cultigens, and nautical terms and devices, have highlighted the regular maritime links between early farming communities in South and Southeast Asia since at least the first millennium BCE (Gupta 2005, p. 22, Hoogervorst 2013, p. 102).

As noted by Hoogervorst (2013, p. 12), there is an increasing awareness that "literary references to commercial activities between these state-level societies [across the Indian Ocean] only reveal the culmination of much older networks", which in the case of South and Southeast Asia go back to at least the second half of the second millennium BCE. Intra-regional Southeast Asian circuits of interaction preceding an "Indianization" period have also been deduced from the distribution of Dongson drums, Sa-Huynh ornaments and jar burials, and agate and carnelian beads (Theunissen, Grave and Bailey 2000). Nephrite artefacts from Southeast Asia and Taiwan, dating to between

3,000 BCE and 500 CE, have been unearthed through much of mainland Southeast Asia and the Philippines, thus providing evidence for extensive sea-based trade networks across the South China Sea (Hung et al. 2007). Long-range contacts between North China and the South China Sea or even the Indian Ocean are suggested by the findings of shell cowries in elite burials of Northern China as early as the second millennium BCE (Li Shuicheng 2003, Liu 2004). Blench (2013*b*) has hypothesized the existence of an arc of vegiculture as early as 10,000 BP, characterized by tubers, Musaceae, sago exploitation and sugar-cane stretching between Melanesia and Eastern Nepal, correlated with linguistic evidence as well as a suite of material culture items and, perhaps, ideas. Certain Austronesian cultural and religious features have been detected in premodern Japan (Abalain 2011, pp. 661, 676), while an argument in favour of an early direct influence from pre-Indicized Java to Japan has been made by Kumar (2009); other intriguing similarities in the realm of the performing arts from Java, Bali and Japan have been pointed out by Coldiron (2005*a*, 2005*b*). Many specialists in the region are sceptical of these (in some cases) rather vaguely defined similarities and we must be wary of assuming these represent a scholarly consensus. The possibility of pre- or early-historical exchanges and commonalities between South and Southeast Asia in the realm of religion have been proposed by Dentan and Aciri (see their respective chapters in this volume). An attempt to revise the mainstream historical paradigm concerning human dispersal across Monsoon Asia and the Pacific Ocean has been made by Oppenheimer (1998) and Santos (2005), who have traced the ultimate origin of the Austronesians back to the Sunda shelf or Sundaland; although these works remain highly controversial, they reflect the uncertainty—and openness—of a field that promises exciting discoveries, and which makes an increasingly important contribution to global history.

Given the paucity of records, research on cultural elements going back to a remote past is bound to be fraught with uncertainty; however, it needs to be pursued with renewed vigour as it could help us to link together, and make sense of, data drawn from linguistics, archaeology, and genetics.

7. The Present in the Past

Modern visitors to Southeast Asia often express frustration at the rush to modernity; traditional architecture demolished, older clothing styles discarded and musical traditions displaced in the hurry to reach the twenty-first century on schedule. Angkor or Borobudur are valued, not much for their artistry or their place in the identity of the present residents of the area, but as tourist and commercial opportunities. Perhaps the fact that both were forgotten, covered by the humid forest, and had to be uncovered by European visitors, points to a local perception of impermanence of the material world. Culture is politics in Southeast Asia and the unfolding perception of the region's past is being rapidly incorporated into the narrative of the present (Glover 2006).

Nonetheless, perhaps characteristically, both the Sinitic and “Malay” areas have begun to recognize the importance of history and culture in constructing national identity. Mobile phones can be made anywhere, but distinctive regional cultures which can re-inspire architecture, writing and build national consciousness are beginning to be valued. The National Museum and Asian Civilisations Museum of Singapore are striking examples of this approach. While Singapore is largely a colonial construct, recent archaeological excavations have unearthed its precolonial heritage, which has been integrated into the national master-narrative of the (old and modern) port-city at the crossroads of the maritime routes connecting India and China via Southeast Asia (Miksic 2013). But the bulk of the heritage must be bought in and so it has been, on a considerable scale, to the benefit of international auction houses. The three major communities which make up the population—the Chinese, Malay, and Indian—are all represented by artefacts from their ancestral areas, the emphasis being on the harmonious relations between them.

A somewhat different approach can be seen in Taiwan, the ancestral home of the Austronesians. Inhabited from roughly 25,000 BP by diverse peoples from the mainland, the island was revolutionized by the appearance of Neolithic migrants at around 5,500 BP. These spread out and diversified into every possible ecozonal niche. Han migration began in the seventeenth century, encouraged by the Dutch, and by the

period of the Japanese occupation, the indigenous Austronesians had been swamped demographically, and many lowland populations assimilated. During most of the twentieth century, these “aborigines” were disdained and marginalised. In a disgraceful act of indifference, the Nationalist government turned Lanyu, the home of the Yami people, into a nuclear waste dump. However, the evolution of democracy in Taiwan in the 1990s, began an almost magical transformation. The notion of Taiwan as the seat of ancestral Austronesian culture suddenly implied the indigenous populations were to be respected if not entirely understood. Literacy programmes were rolled out, museums were opened or expanded, international conferences were funded, foreign scholars who had taken an interest in Austronesians in Taiwan invited. In 2016, the Taiwanese Government issued a formal apology to its indigenous populations for their treatment. Welcome as this was, it was not entirely disinterested; it was clearly intended to reflect an identity separate from mainland China. The requirement for Taiwan to be seen as distinctive, not simply another province of the People’s Republic, clearly underlies the rather sudden interest in the Austronesians. Sadly, it is too late for many languages. Kavalan and Pazeh have disappeared in the late twentieth century and some others are set to follow. Meanwhile Taiwanese logging companies are complicit in the logging and eviction of Austronesian speakers in the highlands of northeastern Cambodia. The rise of the nation state entertains a wide variety of ironies.

A recent phenomenon of “Pan-Austronesianism” involving the valorisation of Malayo-Polynesian origins and identity can be witnessed in Malaysia and Indonesia. This can be charitably divided into what might be called the “lunatic fringe”, the alignment of Austronesians with the inhabitants of the lost continent of Lemuria proposed by the Theosophists, which would be coterminous with the submerged continental shelf of Sundaland (a link between Lemuria or Atlantis and Java was theorized by the Theosophist Leadbeater in 1951). More recently, the above-mentioned studies by Oppenheimer and Santos, as well as the discovery of allegedly man-made early structures on Gunung Padang in West Java, have fuelled a wave of historical/historiographic revisionism in the Malay-Indonesian world—both in scholarly press and

on social media, mainstream press and TV. Alas, the ensuing body of work is characterized entirely by a nationalistic agenda, and therefore is more interesting as a socio-cultural phenomenon than for its potential to revolutionize the current historical paradigms.

More mainstream are the groups headed by academics and public intellectuals to bring together the so-called “Malay race”—which would include all Malayo-Polynesian language speakers, as far east as the Māori. There is nothing wrong with this idea in principle, although the framing of Austronesian as a type of Malay expansion goes back to the long-discredited Proto- and Deutero-Malay model espoused by Heine-Geldern (1932*b*). These groups are also elaborating a (trans-)national narrative that revives and re-evaluates the Austronesian roots of the Malay people and culture by linking them to an ancestral “lost civilization” that would predate the earliest known vestiges of the Sumerian and Chinese civilizations. This has rather odd consequences: some of the papers in a volume on the Austronesians of Sulawesi suggest that some ethnic groups are “more Austronesian” than others (Simanjuntak 2008).

8. Summary of the Contributions

This volume includes seven of the fourteen papers presented at the conference, with the addition of four papers from invited contributors. The aim of our intellectual enquiry is to investigate the cultural flows, interactions and agencies across the seas and land masses of Monsoon Asia. The chapters reflect the disciplinary perspectives of History and Historiography, Linguistics, Ethnography, Archaeology and Art History, and Religious Studies. They discuss various expressions of cultural trajectories, shared commonalities, and continuities before, during and after the Austronesian ethnolinguistic and cultural expansion. They interpret its encounter with an indigenous substrate of Austroasiatic-speaking cultures on the one hand and Indic Cosmopolitan polities on the other—a process of cross-fertilization that might have occurred over a millennium. Taken collectively, they try to transcend the traditional paradigm of “Indianization”/“Sanskritization” vs. “local genius”, and explore the possibility of the existence of supra-local

cultural formations both before and after the emergence of the so-called “Sanskrit Cosmopolis” around 500 AD.

The discussion is opened by two closely-related chapters that, situating themselves in the “Monsoon Asian approach” advanced by early twentieth-century French scholarship, tackle the controversial issue of a shared religious matrix in early Monsoon Asia. Robert Dentan’s “Fearsome Bleeding, Boogeyman Gods and Chaos Victorious: A Conjectural History of Insular South Asian Religious Tropes” tries to reconstruct the religious situation current among Austroasiatic-speaking populations of islands across South and Southeast Asia around 1500 BC—that is, before Indian thought took solid form in the Vedas and Austronesian-speakers dominated the islands. Drawing from his previous comparative work, Dentan hypothesizes a common ancestry between Nkuu’, the thundersquall-God of the Semai ethnic group in highland peninsular Malaysia, and the fierce Vedic Rudra, on account of their similar nature and common features.

Andrea Acri’s “Tantrism ‘Seen from the East’” raises the question as to whether the socio-religious current we now call “Tantrism” may represent a wider Monsoon Asian areal phenomenon, with roots in a past that predates the common era. Being directly inspired by, and engaging with, the work of Robert Dentan, this chapter evaluates his theory of a common religious base in South and Southeast Asia. It focuses on the hypostases of the Vedic god Rudra-Śiva and the related Śaiva and Śākta Tantric traditions that arose in South Asia in the mediaeval (Post-Gupta) period, and adds evidence from premodern and modern South Asian, Javano-Balinese, and Malay contexts. The presence of similar religious tropes and a shared vocabulary suggest long-standing historical connections between South and Southeast Asian societies, which cannot always be explained in terms of influences of the former over the latter but are rather suggestive of a complex process of exchange, and perhaps of a common ancestry.

Next come three chapters dealing with the tantalizing relationship between ethnolinguistic, socio-cultural, and archaeological features over mainland and island Southeast Asia. Alexandra Landmann’s “Can We Reconstruct a ‘Malayo-Javanic’ Law Area?” advances a hypothesis

concerning the reconstruction of a posited ethno-linguistic Malayo-Javanic cultural and law area, and pinpoints lines of evidence to delineate the boundaries of such an area. On the basis of secondary literature, and previous fieldwork on indigenous and traditional legal systems (*adat*, *pikukuh karuhun*, *dresta*) in Bali, Banten and Central Kalimantan, it uses historical anthropology and a triangulation of linguistic, archaeological and biological evidence to reconstruct a cultural and legal complex that would be shared by several ethnic groups of the Western Malayo-Polynesian linguistic area.

In his “Ethnographic and Archaeological Correlates for an Mainland Southeast Asia Linguistic Area”, Roger Blench argues that the broadly-recognized linguistic convergence area of mainland Southeast Asia must also have material and social correlates. Setting out the evidence for musical instruments, the crossbow, house types and dress, he considers whether this area can also be connected with the Southeast Asian distribution of sumatraliths. Finally, the chapter speculates that the type of linguistic similarities reflect a “consensus” culture, where sounding and behaving like neighbouring peoples is desirable, while underlining minor differences.

“Was There a Late Prehistoric Integrated Southeast Asian Maritime Space? Insight from Settlements and Industries” by Bérénice Bellina investigates the hypothesis that the strong spatial and human integration in Southeast Asia that we can see in modern times is the outcome of much earlier dynamics of maritime Southeast Asian globalization, possibly dominated by Austronesian speakers. Recent archaeological excavations have indeed demonstrated that the second millennium BC populations actively interacted within the South China Sea, establishing networks that could have laid the ground for common practices and cultural affinities by 500 BC. To answer the question as to whether there is evidence for shared patterns of values, norms and cultural models during the late prehistoric period that could be indicative of an ancient regional integration, the author discusses two sets of data. The first are the settlements of Co Loa in northern Vietnam and the Khao Sam Kaeo in the Thai-Malay Peninsula, where processes of urbanism emerged in the late prehistoric period, that is well before

the emergence of early States. The second are the two types of industries found within maritime networks, i.e. stone ornaments and the “Sa Huynh-Kalanay” ceramics. These archaeological datasets throw light on the socio-political and economic dynamics that many populations were facing in Southeast Asia at that time, which arguably prefigure later historical configurations.

The ensuing two chapters extend the correlation of linguistic features, social mores and material culture to the issue of human dispersal. “Looms, Weaving, and the Austronesian Expansion” by Chris Buckley focuses on a fascinating and important aspect of the material culture of mainland and island Southeast Asia and Southern China, namely the distributions of the body-tensioned loom and the *ikat* weaving technologies for making decorated textiles. The author attempts to interpret the present-day distributions of these technologies stemming from the premodern past by contrasting it to the archaeological record, and elaborate a theory about prehistoric dispersals by comparing the looms of the mainland with those of the Austronesian-speaking peoples of island Southeast Asia. He concludes that it is difficult to explain the present-day distribution of looms and *ikat* weaving according to the popular “out of Taiwan” model, and that these characteristically “Austronesian” technologies appear to have originated directly from the Asian mainland.

Waruno Mahdi’s “Pre-Austronesian Origins of Seafaring in Insular Southeast Asia” is an enquiry into an important yet poorly understood chapter of global history, namely the earliest sea crossings and offshore fishing. On the basis of archaeological and linguistic data, Mahdi argues that island Southeast Asia was the area where these activities could have originated, around 45,000 BP. Using biogenetic data that place the populations of Taiwan and island Southeast Asia closer to one another than either of them to that of the Chinese mainland, the author argues that early navigational technology was acquired from ancestors of present-day “Negritos” who, retreating before the rising seas, travelled to Fujian and then Taiwan. By correlating these findings with linguistic data, Mahdi makes a case for the existence of early maritime networks spanning from the South China Sea to the Bay of Bengal.

An approach to cultural transfer and human migration from the disciplinary perspective of linguistics is the hallmark of the next two chapters. In “The Role of ‘Prakrit’ in Maritime Southeast Asia Through 101 Etymologies”, Tom Hoogervorst presents a novel contribution to the study of language contact between South and Southeast Asia, in particular the oft-neglected “Prakrit” or Middle Indo-Aryan loanwords that were borrowed by Malay, Old Javanese and many other Southeast Asian languages during the first millennium CE. While scholarship on the exchange of vocabulary between South and Southeast Asia has traditionally prioritized the role of Sanskrit and the “high culture” carried by it, a focus on (North) India’s historical spoken languages reveals a vernacular dimension of interethnic contact, challenging scholars to reconsider the shape, structure and nature of the maritime networks that have shaped Asia’s pre-colonial past.

Alexander Adelaar’s “Who Were the First Malagasy, and What Did They Speak?” offers a glimpse of island Southeast Asia and Madagascar as parts of an interconnected world by investigating what the Malagasy homeland in Borneo looked like from a geographical, social, and political perspective. Adelaar discusses what the linguistic information about Malagasy and other members of the Southeast Barito language family in South Borneo tell us about the time when Malagasy became a separate language. Several linguistic developments (the abundance of Malay, Javanese and Sanskrit loanwords, the slightly different ways in which certain consonants have changed, and the adoption of the Javanese politeness marking prefix *ra-*) set Malagasy off against other Southeast Barito languages. They show that it is not a direct continuation of any of these languages. On the contrary, it had already undergone a separate evolution before the migration of its speakers to East Africa. This has possible implications for the way we should view the social position of these speakers. Rather than slaves obtained from communities that have persisted until today in any of the existing Southeast Barito speaking groups, they may have been vassals who lived on a relatively equal footing with members of the Malay metropolis (nowadays Banjarmasin) and were on their way to become assimilated to that metropolis.

The two chapters closing this collection elaborate on the interplay between the cosmopolitan and the local in Southeast Asia and the wider Western Malayo-Polynesian/Austronesian worlds. “*Śāstric* and Austronesian Comparative Perspectives: Parallel Frameworks on Indic Architectural and Cultural Translations Among Western Malayo-Polynesian Societies” by Imran bin Tajudeen investigates the nature of the interplay between autochthonous and Indian elements in the formation of Southeast Asia’s Indic cultures. The author describes the translations of *śāstric* sources into architecture and art forms according to patterns that integrated Indic and Austronesian paradigms. Early architectural examples from Central Java, Sumatran sites and Kedah prompts us to reconsider some existing assumptions on processes and phases of “Indianization” resting upon a dichotomous conception of Indian and indigenous elements that assume a separation between them and their juxtaposition as distinct elements accessible to “stratigraphic” scrutiny. Neither the “Sanskrit Cosmopolis” perspective nor the opposite reactionary emphasis on “localization” or “indigenization” is adequate, since they do not go beyond the presumption of a model of centre-periphery relations that presume Indian agency and indigenous passivity followed belatedly by a “vernacular” response. Thus, Imran argues, the analysis of the Austronesian-Indic cultural encounter and its outcomes in architecture and art should seek to identify the interaction and mutual transformation of the autochthonous and Indic simultaneously.

Robert Wessing’s “The Lord of the Land Relationship in Southeast Asia” focuses on a figure whose position, though locally referred to by various titles, can be characterized as “the Lord of the Land”, and whose referent can vary from a spirit, the founder of a community, the head of a village or localized descent line, or a king. In his capacity as leader of this descent group, this figure fulfils a role that encompasses land-rightly, priestly, and politico-administrative tasks. Rather than attributing the differences to local variation, Wessing tries to link together the ideas that—at least in the past—underlay and unified these usages throughout Southeast Asia. His findings pave the ground for further comparative study of this apparently translocal trope in the wider Austronesian world.

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2

FEARSOME BLEEDING, BOOGEYMAN GODS AND CHAOS VICTORIOUS A Conjectural History of Insular South Asian Religious Tropes

Robert Dentan

What song the Syrens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, though puzzling questions, are not beyond all conjecture.

Sir Thomas Browne, *Urn Buriall* (n.d. [1643], p. 190)

One...source, though not strictly legitimate as evidence for...ancient religious traditions as they existed before Indian or Chinese influence...[is] our knowledge of the religious practices current in recent times among...tribal peoples of the area. Such communities have preserved distinctive cultural traditions characteristic of those who, like the ancestors of modern Southeast Asians, live in small groups and lack a written language or full-time religious specialists.

de Casparis and Mabbett (1999, p. 280)

It seems fitting that we start our inquiry into the relationships between Indic, Austroasiatic, and Austronesian language-speaking peoples in Monsoon Asia by trying to reconstruct the situation around 1500 BC, before Indian thought took solid form in the Vedas and Austronesian-speakers dominated the islands. We know that there were people in the islands for thousands of years before that, early forms of *Homo erectus* and now-extinct variants of *Homo sapiens* like the Hobbits of Flores or the Denisovans who left traces of their genetic material in the outer islands. At a guess, these people tended to be short and dark, like Munda of Chota Nagpur, some inhabitants of the Mentawai islands, or Semang of interior central West Malaysia.

Little trace of their original languages remains (Blust 2013). “It seems reasonably safe to assume that Andamanese is the sole remaining linguistic representative of pre-Neolithic Southeast Asia, its roots perhaps going back as far as the initial colonization of Southeast Asia by modern humans—an isolate that has remained largely unaffected by the vast linguistic spreads that have occurred elsewhere in Southeast Asia in Neolithic and post-Neolithic times” (Burenhult 1996, p. 14), though northern Andamanese may have Austroasiatic affinities (Blevins in Blust 2013, p. xx, fn. 7). The other linguistic isolate is Shompen, traditionally spoken by foragers among the Austroasiatic-speaking Nicobarese (Blench 2010). Blust (2013) suggests that these people may have migrated to Indonesia not through Malaysia but by sea, from Burma.

Linguists (e.g., Kaskija 2012) suggest that some other dominant language families of the region were Austroasiatic, like Munda or Semang. For instance, Blench (2010, p. 140) suggests that “there were Austroasiatic-speakers in West-Central Borneo, as far as the island of Palawan, prior to the arrival of Austronesian in the area”. Adelaar (2006) concurs. Together with remnants in the Nicobars and perhaps in Sumatra, the distribution of Austroasiatic resembles “a pattern associated in other parts of the world with early populations that have been fragmented by the subsequent migrations of economically more dominant peoples” (Blust 1994, pp. 25–30; 2013). Although Blust (e.g., 1994) and others suggest Nicobarese and possibly the language of the Onge may be remnants of a separate, earlier Austroasiatic migration, Blevins (2007)

suggests that Ongan is the “long lost sister” of Austronesian. The frequent interaction in historic times of Sumatrans along the east coast with adjacent Austroasiatic peoples of Malaysia suggests that parts of Sumatra could have been also, at least in part, once Austroasiatic-speaking (cf. Bulbeck 1998). Btsisi’ (“Mah Meri”) told Dentan in the 1970s that until the *Konfrontasi* with Indonesia they had routinely crossed the Straits of Malacca to visit their compeers in east Sumatra. There seems no compelling reason that their progenitors in what is now Johor, Malacca and Selangor would have eschewed such trips.

The bulk of the populace were probably foragers or simple swiddeners, like most West Malaysian indigenes (Orang Asli), with whom I have lived for over half-a-dozen years, all told, over the last half century or so. It is important not to overdraw the distinction between foraging and agriculture, particularly in this area (Dentan 2008; 2011, pp. 93–95; 2013; Ellen 1982; 1988; Kaskija 2012, pp. 75–76, 79; Rousseau 1990, p. 1). Most foragers in this area tend and even plant “wild” trees (Dentan 1991; Dentan and Ong 1995), traditionally settling down near groves of especially valued trees during the fruit season, which they marked with “great jubilees” (Cameron 1865, p. 116; cf. Sager 2008, p. 43). Applied to sago, the enormously productive starch staple in Malaysia and Borneo until the arrival of British colonialists, this tactic supported large semi-sedentary populations (Ellen 1982; 1988). The stereotype that pre-Austronesian peoples in Indonesia were all hunters and gatherers persists in the myth that all Orang Asli were feckless “wanderers” until recently (Munan and Foo 2005, p. 41; cf. Dove 1983; 1985). Most peoples know enough about both forms of subsistence to slip back and forth from one to another (e.g. Dallos 2011). Punan of Borneo are notorious for this flexibility, which also characterizes Austroasiatic foragers like Juang and Birhor in Orissa (Zide and Zide 1976, p. 1330, note 2), Adivasi Dravidian ones like Paliyan in Kerala and Tamil Nadu (Gardner 1985), and Austronesian ones in the Philippines (Eder 1987). It is impossible to document whether peoples who oscillate between the two forms of subsistence began as foragers or as agriculturalists; but both forms of life require specialized bodies of knowledge, so that, for example, Semai and Temiar swiddeners were unable to subsist off the rainforest after the British bombed

their settlements during the Malayan Emergency in the mid-twentieth century. Moreover, there is some evidence that Austroasiatic speakers are responsible for at least some of the artifacts traditionally attributed to—in hindsight—more “civilized” Austronesian influences, like slab graves (Benjamin 1986; 1987; Bulbeck 1998). However flimsy the evidence for a widespread Austroasiatic population of swiddeners and foragers in the area before the arrival of Austronesians, the possibility remains open.

Among Orang Asli, the rituals and folk theology discussed here occur among both swiddeners and foragers, with no indication that they originated with Austronesians. Criteria more relevant to our topic than the vulgar Marxist “dominant style of subsistence” might include such social and political considerations as demography (settlement size and pattern), governance (acephalous vs. patriarchal), stratification (egalitarian vs. ranked or class-ridden) (see Gibson and Sillander 2011 for more detailed discussion).

The advance of Austronesian and/or its speakers into Orang Asli territory in the last few centuries involved “displacement, dispossession..., deprivation” (Gomes 2010, p. 246), extinction and assimilation (Anonymous 2013; Barroux 2013; Dentan et al. 1997; Dentan 1998; Sibon and Yap 2013). That process probably recapitulates the Austronesian advance into Austroasiatic-speaking areas elsewhere in Southeast Asia. Under these circumstances, for indigenous Austroasiatic-speakers “to be unknown was the means of their continuation and obscurity their protection” (Browne n.d. [1643], p. 188). That adaptive obscurity exacerbates the difficulty of the task this chapter proposes to make. It is hard, for example, to find any reference to Job’s tears or foxtail millet in reconstructions of Indonesian history, though these were the ancient cereal crops of Orang Asli, particularly in the highlands, as recently as the early 1960s, and Semai, the Orang Asli with whom I spent most of my time, said that Job’s tears was the “mother of foxtail millet”, which was their next cereal crop (Dentan 1968a, p. 47; 1971; cf. Bellwood 1993, pp. 92–94). Rice reached “east Semai” around the end of the nineteenth century (Dentan 1971, p. 142). Census data from the mid-twentieth century document that foxtail millet was the dominant cereal crop of *maay cnaan*, Semai in the highest mountains along the

Pahang Perak border (Dentan 1971, pp. 138, 140). The proliferation of named cultivars of millet, far more than any other crop, confirms this relative antiquity. The same elision of ancient Austroasiatic crops like millet occurs in accounts of ancient India (Zide and Zide 1976, p. 1303). Rice agriculture, especially of wet rice, is relatively recent in much of the area under discussion; in Malaysia, for example, extensive wet rice cropping was a British, not an Austronesian, introduction.

Presumably, these ancient Austroasiatic peoples lacked an intelligentsia. That is, there was no one with the job of systematizing concepts, rejecting outside influences or otherwise declaring authoritatively which ideas were acceptable (de Casparis and Mabbett 1999, p. 280; Gardner 1976). In their quotidian lives, most people then—like most people now, actually—used a heterogeneous ragbag of ill-considered and unsystematized ideas and metaphors to rationalize, justify and obfuscate whatever activity they were currently engaged in, usually after the fact.¹ So “what we find in specific Southeast Asian cultures is not a coherent system...but only what appear to be fragments of former systems, some of which may have been fairly elaborate” (Jenner 1976, pp. 713–14).

These fragments provide clues to ancient ideas, though they certainly have not survived unchanged (de Casparis and Mabbett 1999, p. 280). But we can use the insights of mid-twentieth century geographers and linguists, who used geographical distributions to provide clues to unwritten history. Even since the advent of other less speculative tools, their conclusions have held up pretty well (e.g., Dvorak, Luo and Akhunov 2011; Vavilov 1992; Sauer 1969). Indeed, although Clark Wissler’s “age area hypothesis”, that how widely a particular cultural item is distributed indicates how ancient it is, is only useful in its vaguest sense (Woods 1934; Murdock 1948), still the idea persists that the study of culture areas provides clues to unwritten history of

¹ See Dentan and Nicholls 2011, and also Beals 1962, pp. 46, 49; Brooks 2011; Eder 1987, p. 200; Gardner 1966, 1976, 1991; Guenther 1979; Macdonald 2007, p. 91; Nietzsche 2008, pp. 7–13; Pucci 1992, pp. 28–29; Rousseau 1995; Sellato and Sercombe 2007, p. 24; Sercombe 2007, pp. 245–46; Sweet 2008, pp. xxiv–xxv.

particular ecological zones. We would not, after all, be discussing this topic if we did not agree with the formulation of another museum curator (and colleague of Wissler's) Josselin de Jong (e.g., 1935), that insular Southeast Asia constitutes a legitimate "field of ethnological study", though, as Geoffrey Benjamin points out (personal communication), Josselin de Jong himself asserted that Malaysian Austroasiatic-speakers and Malays fit into different fields of ethnological study.

The speculative reconstruction I propose rests primarily on ethnological comparison within this field. Its own history begins with the speculations of the *Kulturkreislehre* of the early twentieth century, a largely Catholic variant of the areal/reconstructive movement discussed above. By the 1930s this school centred in Vienna, its major practitioners being Catholic missionary priests, Paul Schebesta, a Czech, among them. Their religion and their ethnographic studies combined to produce the notion of an *Urkultur*, primordial culture, localized among negritos all over the world and characterized by monogamy, patriarchy and monotheism. From this beginning, human lifeways entered, they believed, an unbroken moral decline. Schebesta's extensive and ethnographically rich work in Malaysia (notably 1926, 1927, 1957, 1973 [1928]) confirmed, he thought, this reconstruction of the past. By the mid-twentieth century he dropped strict adherence to the *Kulturkreislehre*, as did almost all of its early devotees.

1. Blood Sacrifice

When it thunders the women cut their legs with knives till the blood flows, and then catching the drops in a piece of bamboo, they cast them aloft towards the sky to propitiate the angry deities.

Maxwell (1879, p. 48)

During a storm of thunder and lightning the Semang draw a few drops of blood from the region of the shin-bone, mix it with a little [rain]water in a bamboo receptacle, and throw it up to the angry skies (according to the East Semang or Pangan [Kensiu or Batek?]) once up to the sky and once on the ground, saying... 'stop'....

Skeat and Blagden (1906, II, p. 104)

Anthropologists nowadays do not accept the reality of the *Urkultur*. For example, gender equality is more marked among Batek Semang than among most documented peoples (Endicott and Endicott 2008). In practice, moreover, although married couples are the fundamental units of most Austroasiatic peoples in this region (e.g., Endicott and Endicott 2008; Nowak 1984, 1988), marriage tends to shade into serial polygamy, at least while the partners remain young. But the blood sacrifice that Schebesta made famous (1926, 1927, 1973, pp. 87–88) remains a puzzle for ethnologists.

A salient but less widespread feature of the “thunder complex” (Blust 1981), this rite manifests an emotional focus that links flowing human blood, panic and supernatural possession. Temiar express this connection by saying that the smell of blood attracts tigers, the fearful objective correlative for supernatural phenomena in general (Benjamin 2014). It is central to twentieth-century thunder squall rituals from West Malaysia to the Philippines, including several Semang peoples, Semai and Temiar in central West Malaysia; some Punan foragers in Borneo; Mamanua and Aeta foragers in the Philippines and Austronesian-speakers as far as Papua New Guinea.² Blood is a “natural symbol” (Douglas 1970; Needham 1967) in the sense that it tends to produce an “affective response which is as natural to the [human] organism...as... the phototropism of marigolds is natural in other realms of life” (Needham 1967, p. 284; cf. Freeman 1987). Blood is salient in sacrifices around the world, including Holy Communion.

But among Semai and Semang, moreover, the sight of spurting blood can produce a state Semai call “blood intoxication”, *blnuul bhiip*, which is salient and unique enough to have produced its own analytic literature (e.g., Robarchek and Dentan 1987). Sue Jennings devotes a chapter to the significance of blood for Temiar (1995, pp. 118–36). Similarly, Borneo Punan make a “great fuss” about blood, as do their Kenyah

² See, for example, Benjamin 2014, pp. 82–85; Blust 1981, 1991, 2013; Brosius 1989, p. 91; Dentan 1968a, pp. 21–24 and 2008, pp. 65–85; Evans 1923, pp. 151–54 and 1937; Maceda 1964, p. 107; Macdonald 1988; Needham 1967, p. 273; Schebesta 1957, pp. 88, 99; Skeat and Blagden 1906, vol. II, p. 204; Slimming 1958, pp. 153–55; Vaughan-Stevens in Skeat and Blagden 1906, vol. II, p. 205n.

neighbours (Needham 1967, p. 276; Elshout 1932 in Needham 1967, p. 279n2). In other words, both the sight of freshly spilt human blood and the experience of a tropical cyclonic storm produce a kind of culturally specific *panic*. I use the term “panic” here deliberately to recall the experience ancient Greeks reported of being overwhelmed by terror in their trackless forests, a panic which the Greeks attributed to possession by the great god Pan, Everything.

Semai interpret this panic as part of a psychic process, *lnwic*, which involves disorientation and dissociation, dizziness, loss of consciousness and of self-control. A Semai term for the Emergency in Malaya in the 1950s, was *Ln(g)wic*. The Terror. People entering possession trance also *-lwic*. Herman Melville, who understood the Dark Powers, explains: “Though in many of its aspects this visible world seems formed in love, the invisible spheres were formed in fright” (1989, p. 182). In other words, panic opens the way into the demonic dimensions Semai feel are manifest in thunder squalls; conversely, irruptions of demonic forces into this world produce panic. For the peoples under discussion, spurting blood evokes panic and, for the people involved, represents the breakthrough of overwhelming supernatural threats into the safe and familiar cosmos where people can be secure in their daily lives.

Anything their imagination associates with spilt blood makes people uneasy. “[P]ouring certain kinds of blood into streams” seems dangerous to Batek Semang (Endicott 1979a, p. 70; cf. pp. 71n, 76–77, 157). Several of these peoples say that careless treatment of bloodsucking leeches risks generating a storm.³ Any red, yellow or orange thing—e.g., tree saps—recalls blood, people say, and thus warrants ritual circumspection. When skies grow red and yellow in the morning or evening or during a heavy mist in daytime, east Semai withdrew into their houses and fell silent. Citing Gérard Diffloth, Benjamin (2014) reports that *ɲebɲaab*, the Temiar term for this condition, is cognate with Batek Semang *yamp* “blood”. East Semai *nyamp* describes this

³ See, for example, Blust 2013, p. x6; Cooper 1941, p. 31; Endicott 1979a, pp. 63, 71, 73, 74, 156–57; Maceda 1964, p. 116; Needham 1967, p. 277; Schebesta 1973, pp. 189, 223, but contrast 122.

spooky atmospheric condition which, one man said, resulted from tigers' spattering the blood from their prey against the sky (Dentan 1968*a*, pp. 20–21 and 2008, p. 72; cf. Evans 1970, p. 208). Rainbows, foggy sunrises and misty sunsets had the same effect and explanation. Mamanua say rainbows, especially red ones, presage death (Maceda 1964, p. 115, citing similar beliefs among Andamanese). Semang claim rainbows are shadows of the subterranean Dragon which brings the floods that accompany thunder squalls (Dentan 1999*a*, p. 28; Endicott 1979*a*, pp. 186–87). East Semai and some North-Aslian-speaking Semai hold that the thunder-god Karey smears the blood sacrifice on his body. The rainbow/dragon association, however, seems to be a human near-universal, not regionally or “culturally” specific (Blust 2000).

The “sacrifice” in this case is generally though not exclusively by women, usually girls. Semai explain that girls are even more likely than boys to lose the self-control that is so important in an egalitarian society where external sanctions are by definition generally ineffective. The blood comes generally from the shin because cutting there is convenient and relatively painless, not for any ritual reason.

So, how are we to understand this complex? Edmund Leach (1967) divides systems of tropes like those involved in this blood-and-thunder complex into two basic types, public and private. Explaining the former requires knowing the context; the latter needs a psychological explanation. To grossly oversimplify, the former requires a cultural or historical explanation, the latter a psychological or biological one. The first set of phenomena is local, the latter universal—provided certain conditions obtain. Thus one could argue that the complex is a “survival” (Tylor 1920) of an ancient and widespread tradition, not internally consistent in all details, but suggestive of the ground against which more recent religious complexes formed. Or one could argue that any small-scale egalitarian society subjected to tropical cyclones would develop a similar set of beliefs. Moreover, there are, as Needham (1967, pp. 283–84) and Douglas (1970) suggest, certain natural phenomena that impress people everywhere—charismatic megafauna, for instance, so that it is unsurprising to find bears salient in the symbolism of circumpolar peoples or tigers in the symbolism of Southeast Asians. The difficulty that confronts us here is that both explanations seem correct,

as Leach's discussion of "magical hair" suggests (1967). Pounding or burning hair features in some versions of the blood-and-thunder complex.⁴ The peoples under discussion manifest no unique response to hair that corresponds to blood-intoxication, so the fact that it features in the complex seems more "natural" (or less "cultural") than the fact that blood is so salient both in the complex and elsewhere in people's lives. But the fact that a group of Semang Orang Asli say that the red skies preceding a storm (presumably suggestive of blood) have a distinct smell (presumably "bloody") and that the smell of burning hair neutralizes the smell of blood (Wnuk 2014) implies a rationale for burning hair to drive away a storm. Any serious account of the system (e.g., Endicott 1979a; Robarchek 1987a, 1987b) must treat the complex as the product both of cultural convergence as a result of semi-isolated groups responding to mutually similar environmental factors and also as a fragmentary inheritance from an ancient religious system which, due to egalitarianism and dispersion, probably never lacked internal variation.

East Semai associate blood with femininity: menstruation, childbirth, post-partum recovery. These literally bloody and therefore ritually dangerous activities generate a wide range of ritual restrictions, especially for neophytes. Husbands and children are also involved, although to a lesser extent. Men explain not attending childbirth by saying things like "I can't *stand* all that blood". People take precautions to prevent blood from childbirth falling to the earth. So an structuralist analyst, if any survive, might explain the symbolic trope of the blood sacrifice as contrasting "women/blood/warmth/life creativity" with the (male) thunder god's cold rain, death and destruction.

For purposes of our discussion, the elements that are important are those which do not seem to be universal responses of small-scale egalitarian foragers to tropical cyclones, the salience of human blood in the rituals, for instance, and the consequent elaboration of the symbolic weight of taboos on leeches. These features do not seem to be elaborated

⁴ See, for example, Blust 2013; Dentan 2002a, p. 208; Endicott 1979a, pp. 143–44, 155; Macdonald 1988; Needham 1967, pp. 279–80.

in Sumatra, the Nicobars or the Andamans, or even among some southern Aslians like Btsisi' ("Mah Meri") with whom I lived in 1975 (cf. Nowak 2013), although Skeat and Blagden (1906, vol. II, pp. 187n3) refer to Btsisi' deity called "'Gaffer Engkoh' or Jongkoh". Although absence is impossible to demonstrate, a universal reaction to a universal stimulus should occur everywhere (cf. Robarchek 1987*a*, 1987*b*). Moreover, this blood-and-thunder complex involves so large a number of common and similarly unique elements spread over so wide an area, from West Malaysia to New Guinea and Luzon, that time does not allow their enumeration here. Blust (1981, 1991), Endicott (1979*b*), Macdonald (1988) and Maceda (1964) have masterfully marshalled these mutually correlated data (and cf. Needham 1967, p. 280). For all its faults, the age-area hypothesis suggests the complex comprises a set of tropes left over from an ancient ritual praxis in the islands. But there is another common feature, this one more widespread in maritime South Asia: a stupid, violent, mostly male God.

2. The Boogeyman as God?

As Eiuga lives in the sky, the thunder is his voice, and the wind his breath; if he is angry he breathes out storms...The Onges do not love Eiuga or any of the other spirits. They merely fear them, and seek to evade their anger by various expedients...they never hesitate to try and deceive the spirits...by simple tricks.

Cipriani (1966, p. 44)

Violent thunderstorms arise because somewhere a Batak has laughed at an animal....

Eder (1987, p. 200)

[M]an at first multiplied so fast as to make the earth too crowded. Kari the Thunder god slays them with his fiery breath and thus reduces the number of mouths to be fed.

Skeat and Blagden (1906, vol. II, p. 184)

Analogs to the male thunder deity central to Schebesta's Semang "monotheism" occur throughout eastern insular Southeast Asia as well as on the Andamans, from Malaysia to the Philippines, sometimes in addition to a more orthodox high god who, at least among Semai and unlike the thunder deity, lacks gender identity (Dentan 2006; Tijah, Thambiah and Leong 2000; cf. Sellato and Sercombe 2007, p. 24). Indeed, there is some question whether the thunder god is unitary or merely a superordinate concretion of the category "thunder gods" (for a sophisticated discussion of this complex question, see Benjamin 2014, pp. 164–70). When I asked east Semai how many thunder gods there were, they indicated that they had not thought about that question, but guessed, since storms occurred simultaneously in widely scattered locales, that there were probably several of them (Dentan 1968a, p. 39). A west Semai man said in 2006 that a looming cumulus storm front, *ja'ar*, was the ghosts, *kemooc*, of my friends who had died since I was last in Malaysia, coming to welcome me back. (The Temiar word *ja'ar* refers primarily to the flood which attends such thunder squalls [Benjamin, personal communication]). Similarly, Batek Semang say their version of the thunder god, Gobar

is a single male, but Gobar was sometimes described as two brothers, a married couple, and a brother and sister pair. One informant said Gobar wears a plaited waistband, which is a woman's garment, as well as a shirt, a man's garment.

Endicott and Endicott (2008, p. 34)

Although the same ambivalence of gender and number also characterizes some Temiar versions of the thunder god, both Semai and Temiar versions are male enough that, e.g., they send their penises off to seduce their younger brothers' wives (Benjamin 2014, pp. 142, 143; Dentan 2008, p. 104; cf. Macdonald 1988, p. 65). The thunder god seems anomalous in several ways besides maleness.

As a unitary deity, the thunder god resembles the boogeyman (or Thor or Zeus) more closely than it resembles Allah, Yahweh or Indra. For those unfamiliar with the boogeyman, let me take a moment to introduce you. The etymology of this word is uncertain, although it seems to come from the same root as the noun "bug" (insect). This root may refer to

dread (Warner 1998). Coincidentally, some Semai use the word *cee'*, “bug”, to refer to demons. The ideal type form, at least among Temiar, is the head louse (Benjamin, personal communication) but Semai use the term, with modifiers, to refer to various insects and demons (1968*b*). The boogeyman is so grotesque and stupid as to be the subject of mockery despite the fear it provokes (Warner 1998), like zombies in modern U.S. movies. Adults use the boogeyman to frighten children into silent submission to adult authority but in many stories the children outwit the boogeyman. Finally, the boogeyman associates with packs of demonic animals like the baby-headed “gabble ratchets”, black dogs with babies’ heads that hunt down. Both the European and Southeast Asian figures are thus fundamentally ambiguous (feared/mocked, rule-enforcers/rule-breakers, terrorizing children/mocked by children, etc.). In other words, this is a completely ambivalent deity, far more feared and mocked than worshipped, whom people importune not for benefits but to go away.

For comparison, take the east Semai thunder god, Nkuu’, with whose cultus in 1962 I became familiar (and cf. Baharon 1966; Tacey 2013; cf. Endicott 1979*a*, 1979*b*; Skeat and Blagden 1906, vol. II, pp. 299–300). Semai said, sometimes, that you could think of Nkuu’ as a sunbear, though a *siamang*, also black and white, was a more frequent representation, and a huge red or black ape, “like King Kong”, was another common image (cf. Endicott 1979*a*, p. 175; Schebesta 1957, p. 24; Skeat and Blagden 1906, vol. II, p. 187*n*3). The use of bear symbolism in an area in which normally tigers are what Mary Douglas (1970) calls “natural symbols” of magical potency and danger (e.g., Bakels 2000; Wessing 1986) suggests a possible extra-peninsular northern origin for this trope (e.g., Hallowell 1926). On the other hand, monkeys and bears in the *Rāmāyaṇa* seem to represent pre-Aryan indigenes (Dube 1967, p. 95*n*). The name “*Karei*” for Semang and Temiar versions of this deity (Benjamin 2014; Schebesta 1973, pp. 189–92; Skeat and Blagden 1906, vol. II, p. 737) is homonymous with a Mentawaiian term for an authoritative magical-medical expert or “seer” (Loeb 1972, p. 167; Salmeno 1994), a fact of interest because Mentawaians were isolated from mainstream Indonesian culture until the last century, constituting an internal frontier like Aceh (Geertz 1963,

p. 91; Nooy-Palm 1972). They share “ossuary practices and some other customs” with the Austroasiatic-speaking Nicobarese (Nag 1972); but neither group seems to have a thunder deity of the sort discussed here. Taro, not rice, was until recently the main Mentawai crop, and traditionally Nicobarese planted no rice. Benjamin (personal communication) says the r-to-g alterations the word *Karei* goes through in Austronesian languages suggests that it is an old Austronesian word.

Because Karei is merciless, Semang and Temiar call him evil (Benjamin 2014, p. 170; Schebesta 1973, p. 192). Variants of the name in the peninsula include *Karai*, *Kari*, *Karey*, and *Kaii*. Macdonald (n.d.) reports, significantly, that on Palawan in the Philippines, an apparent variant, *kuyaw* (*kuyew*) seems related to *uyew* (monkey); *kuyawen* (fear of being hit by thunder); and *keuyewen* (improper things or behaviour) (Benjamin 2014; Evans 1923, p. 149; Williams-Hunt 1952, p. 75), and there are near homonyms among Philippine foragers (Blust 2013). Adela Baer suggests that some Borneo names for orangutan seem to relate to Karei/Kuyaw, such as *kayies*, *kayas*, *kagiu*, *kagyu*, *kogiu*, *kuyang* (2008).

The alternative name *Tapern* (Evans 1923, pp. 149–50) may be a version of Semai Bah Pent; in Semai *Ta'* is a title for an elder, *Bah* for a person too immature to have opinions one needs to heed. Variants of *pent* mean “short” in several Aslian languages (Benjamin 1976, p. 115; Skeat and Blagden 1906, vol. II, p. 715 (word 281)). Thus the name of this figure would be “Master Shorty”. Still, though tempting, this is probably a false etymology (Benjamin 2013). There are many stories of Bah Pent’s greed, credulity and humiliation (e.g., Dentan 1968a, p. 23; Endicott 1979a, pp. 133, 189, 192, 195–98, 212; Juli Edo 1990, pp. 86–94; cf. Benjamin 2014, pp. 142, 143). Similarly, *Gubar*, the Batek Semang version of the thunder god, “has a double persona (he is also a Trickster-like figure) subject to ...a set of tales that mercilessly mocks the Gubar character” and provoke “helpless giggles” (Lye 2004, p. 155; cf. Endicott 1979a, pp. 70–79, 163, 164; Lye 2004, p. 203).

Second, there is a Malay title *engku* or *tengku*, whose etymology Wilkinson (1959) says is unclear and which appears in Malay literature about the time of the founding of Malacca. This term seems not to be a variant of *tunku*, the short form of *tun aku* or *tuan aku*, which can

be glossed as “milord”. In the Riaus, *engku* was the title of children of princes of the highest rank by wives of lesser status. Marrying local princesses was a standard way for Austronesian adventurers to establish claim to new territories, and the use of variants of *engku* for lineages of non-Malay indigenous peoples in southern West Malaysia suggests that something of the sort may be going on here. Moreover, throughout Southeast Asian conquerors identified themselves with the “ancient storm god” of the people they conquered (Cady 1964, pp. 37–38). The choice of an ambivalent god that both manifests and punishes violence as a symbol for the rulers of a terrorist conquest statelet seems appropriate, at least from the viewpoint of the subordinated indigenes (e.g., Dentan 2008; Tacey 2013; cf. Endicott 2013, pp. 247, 248 and in prep. 15; van der Sluys 2006, p. 30). Later on, the piratical conquerors in Southeast Asia would identify themselves with Rudra or with Śiva the Destroyer. The Palawan title *empuq*, “‘master, owner’.... ‘Lord’ or ‘God’”, refers to a more benign high god, a superior sort of “spirit” (Macdonald 2007, p. 102).

Presumably the conquerors chose the title to express their fearsomeness. But, although Nkuu’ is scary because he is violent, he is also stupid and easily tricked, often a figure of fun. Semai tricked him into sharing his cold shamanic power with humanity, for instance. Such duplicity is central to Semai ideas of *srnlook*, betraying or hunting down and killing, the dominant relationship between people and the animals which, manifesting as demons, make people sicken and die, or if erotically attracted to someone, provide him assistance in finding cures. The Semai relationship with Nkuu’ is similarly complex. When it seems safe to do so Semai and most foragers who practise this cult tell funny stories about Nkuu’s remarkable stupidity and mock the animals who are his protégés, for example holding out the arms of a wounded gibbon and making it dance, despite the rule against such mockery, which disrespects and blurs the boundary between humans and animals (but cf. Brosius 1989, p. 91; Mera’ee 2001, p. v; Schebesta 1973, pp. 189, 190). If detected, such mockery can bring on thunder squalls, but mockery is intrinsic to people’s relationship with Nkuu’ and his animal minions (Dentan 2008, pp. 87–89).

The new rulers may not have realized that among egalitarian peoples asserting authority is distasteful, so that appointed east Semai headmen making speeches by which they hope to influence political decisions usually preface their remarks with a little riff about being old and feeble, perhaps “deaf in one ear”, so as not to seem “arrogant”, one of the transgressions that Semai say Nkuu’ punishes with thunder squalls. The Semai word for “arrogant” conflates Malay words for arrogance and incest; incest is a horror in part because it crosses generational or other boundaries between which respect relationships are proper (cf. Evans 1923, p. 153; Schebesta 1973, pp. 97, 109, 190–91). The ritual restrictions would include categories we would call incestuous but in fact the salient feature of these actions seems to be disrespecting the boundaries of kinship categories. Like mixing categories of food that should be kept separate, such behaviour creates ritual confusion and chaos (Blust 1981, Blust 2013; Brosius 1989; Dentan 1970, Dentan et al. (1997), pp. 37, 46; Endicott in prep. 14) and can generate a thunder squall. For Western peoples, sex is the important part of incest; for Semai and Semang, it is blurring the distinctions which keep the cosmos orderly and safe (cf. Nagata 2011, p. 145). The general term for such carelessness is *rawuuc*, a term used for wandering from the path and thus a metaphor like English “errant”, a term which also used to mean “wandering” (cf. Roseman 1984, p. 428).

There are several terms that refer to actions that incur thunder squalls. Probably the best known is Semai-Temiar *trlaij* (*telaiddn* in some sources), cognate with *lawaij*, “taboo” and perhaps with *lij-laij*, “throw a snit/hissy”, “lose it” (as in American slang), i.e. lose self-control and “wander” in the sense introduced in the last paragraph.

Such disorder in the human sphere naturally generates disorder in the cosmos. One name for the thunder god is *Cmam*, the Kensiw Semang word for what we call “incest” (Evans 1937, p. 184), as if the two disorders, thunder squalls and incest, were basically one. Schebesta says that “incest” is “caused by a lightning strike” (1957, p. 97). In Borneo the word *baliw* like *báliw* among Cebuano Bisayan in the Philippines, refers to divine punishment for “crazy” behaviour, often incest, consisting of being struck by lightning and turned into stone (Blust 2013). Blust (2013, p. 408) dismisses as mistaken reports of a Sarawak Malay word, *buak*,

meaning “calamitous retribution brought about by mocking another being or animal—often involving storm and petrefaction” (Mera’ee 2001, p. v). A peninsular Malay homonym refers, among other things, to spurting, as of arterial blood.

While many of the peoples under discussion describe thunder squalls as punishment for bad behaviour, there is another sense in which it is simply a phenomenon of the same kind, naturally co-occurrent. The violent rain blurs one’s eyes, the indiscriminate wind and floods wash away safe and familiar categories, dissolving the world into demonic violence and death. Nkuu’, the boogeyman, himself an ambiguous and ambivalent figure, represents as well as generates the chaos which violating proper boundaries brings. The annual earth cleansing ceremony of Palawan peoples, failure to perform which releases the forces of chaos, also focuses on “incest” and violence (Macdonald 2007, pp. 107–13; and cf. Blust 1981, 1991). Even in English, “violence” and “violating” stem from the same root. Panic is the only appropriate response.

3. Hantu Buru, Rudra and Hundun

A careful investigation of the magic rites...used by a nation which has changed its religion will not unfrequently show, that what is generally called witchcraft is merely the *debris* of the older ritual, condemned by the priests of the newer faith, but yet stubbornly, though secretly, persisting, through the unconquerable religious conservatism of the mass of the people.

Skeat (1900, p. 83)

Since the middle of the twentieth century, anthropologists and historians have tended to construe peasants as living in “little societies” whose culture was a partial and ill-conceived and partial version of the more reflective high culture of their economic and political superiors (e.g., Redfield 1956). In peninsular Southeast Asia, for example, scholars cast the Malay “spectre huntsman”, *hantu pemburu*, *hantu langut* (McHugh 1959, pp. 23–35) and kindred demons like the *hantu raya* (great demon), *hantu tinggi* (tall demon) or *hantu rimba* (primary rainforest demon)

(Ahmad Embun 1959, pp. 1–4, 19–23; McHugh 1959, pp. 35–41) as “discarded divinities of older faiths” (Wilkinson 1901, p. 395, s.v. *hantu*). These “great demons”, like Nkuu’, appear “especially at times when there is a storm with heavy rain and wind mixed with lightening” (Malay informant, in McHugh 1959, p. 36). Like Nkuu’, they are associated with leeches and storm birds (McHugh 1959, pp. 31, 32).

Since Indic religions were dominant in the area before the arrival of Islam, it made sense for British colonial scholars to link the spectre huntsman, a boogeyman-like thunder deity, with Śiva or Indra. Not only ethnologists, but probably many of the Indian immigrants and Indianized Malay quislings who made up the ruling class of Malaysia saw the spectre huntsman and primal demon as avatars of Śiva, *Batara Guru*, “Avatar Mentor” (Skeat 1900, pp. 86–87). This version of Śiva, at least in Indonesia, is “a powerful, mischievous, and malignant tyrant” (Crawfurd 1820, vol. II, p. 219), like Nkuu’ a good representative of the piratical coastal regimes that afflicted Southeast Asia in olden times (cf. Dentan 2002*b*, pp. 178–79, n. 10; Tacey 2013). I want to suggest, however, that, rather than thinking of the spectre huntsman or *Batara Guru* as inferior peasant versions of Śiva, it would make more sense to think of them as Indianized versions of the thunder god of the Austroasiatics and early Austronesians whom they so closely resemble.

Let me cite an analogous case. The Semai heartland along the Bernam River was once a Khmer colony. The name Bernam comes from Mon-Khmer *bnuum*, *phnom*, mountain. The name for the trance-possession ceremony there is *n’asiik*, from the Arabic-Malay word *asyik*, pleasure, in this case referring to the ecstasy of mystical experience. There was extensive Sufi missionary activity in the area in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and both Semai and Malays still make pilgrimages to the grave “mounds” (*busut*) where the spiritual powers (Arabic-Malay *keramat*, from Greek *charisma*) might linger (cf. Beals 1962, p. 48). That is, there was considerable interaction between the two parties, enough that they could recognize the similarities between Sufi self-immolation in God and Semai demonic possession and therefore give both the same name. (Remember: Sufism is a heresy in Islam because it recognizes multiple, personal ways to

God.) Still, though both involve trance, the Sufi version is conceptually and experientially distinct from the Semai one, and it is extremely unlikely that either party learned its praxis from the other. What I want to suggest is (1) that, in the peninsula, most indigenous Malays are Orang Asli converted to Islam and retaining versions of the earlier Austroasiatic boogeyman god, and (2) that before the conversion, Hindu Malaysians (i.e., Śaivite) recognized the similarities between their storm God and the earlier Austroasiatic one, and, like the Sufis, used terms and concepts familiar to themselves to understand the prior Austroasiatic reality; and (3) that the Austroasiatics in turn may have refined their notions of the boogeyman god by incorporating Malay and Hindu ideas. This two-way traffic has occurred in other areas (e.g., Benjamin 2012; Dentan 1999*b*, 2001).

These Austroasiatic boogeyman thunder deities and their Austronesian kin may have a pre-Vedic Indian cousin, Rudra “Cruel and Wild” (Doniger O’Flaherty 1975) who “is addressed more in the hope of keeping him at bay than with the wish to keep him near...fierce and destructive like a terrible beast, like a wild storm... Yet Rudra is not merely demonic, for he is the healer and cooler as well as the bringer of disease and destructive fever” (Doniger O’Flaherty 1981, p. 219). Rudra, Hindu mythology says, is an ancient, dark deity, first an elder brother of the gods, and later their implacable enemy. As a trope,

Rudra was the embodiment of wildness, unpredictable danger, and fever but also of the healer and cooler, who attacks ‘like a ferocious wild beast’ ([*Rg Veda*] 2.33). He lives on the margins of the civilized world as one who comes from the outside, an intruder, and is excluded from the Vedic sacrifice.

Doniger (2009, p. 120)

This characterization is almost synonymous with Riboli’s (2013) description of Gobar, a Semang thunder god. There are enough other similarities between Rudra and Nkuu’/Gobar that some sort of historical kinship seems probable, as I have argued in detail elsewhere (Dentan 2002*a*, pp. 217–20; 2002*b*), too many similarities to repeat here. And Rudra’s stressed “outsider” status may be literal as well as metaphorical.

One need not take Oppenheimer's (1999) discredited view that Indian culture in general originates from ancient Austronesians (see, e.g., Baer 1999) to recognize the ways in which "Hinduism", which is an "extremely eclectic" (Cady 1964, p. 37; Dube 1967, p. 94) syncretic grab bag of once probably discrete traditions, took the religious ideas of subordinated peoples, demoted them to accord with basic ethnocentric Aryan Hindu beliefs and incorporated some of their elements as *asura*, demigods or demons (see Doniger 2009). After a few "cameo appearances in the Veda" (Doniger 2009, p. 129) Rudra is subsumed into the image of Śiva the Destroyer, in much the same way as Nkuu', Gobar and the other thunder gods disappeared into the cult of Śiva in Malaysia. Their earlier presence seems to have softened up Southeast Asians for Śaivism, leaving them more resistant to worshipping Vishnu (Cady 1964, p. 37). For instance, Nkuu's comic priapism, mocked in Semai stories (e.g., Dentan 2008, p. 74; cf. Benjamin 2014), may manifest itself in the *lingas* that litter Malaysia and Indonesia to honour the male creativity of Śiva the Destroyer. Still, some elements of the old intolerance of ambiguity and horror of category violation remain after the rise of Śaivism and temple cities around 500 AD (Doniger 2009, p. 258). For instance, an early Śaivite sect, the Pāśupatas, "acting in imitation of Rudra (the Vedic antecedent of Siva)" (Flood 2004, p. 113) worshipped Śiva as Lord of Beasts (*paśupati*); their prescribed regimen of worship and asceticism included violating dietary norms and acting in socially-improper manners, i.e. behaving like "a dog, or a bull, or the like" (Acharya 2013, p. 105). Indeed, the elaborate Balinese "Eleven Powers" ceremony (Lansing and Abrams 1980, 1995, pp. 117–21), which involves a hecatomb of beasts, "is an attempt to transform Rudra from an agent of chaos into his godlike form as Siwa" (Lansing 1995, p. 117).

In short, the rising urbanized despotisms first incorporate the ancient thunder gods as symbols of mastery and then demote them to demonic status. Their Indo-Aryan avatars mutate from violent lords of beasts and chaos suitable as tropes for piratical rule into creative lords of order and hierarchy, flipping the evaluation of their ability to destroy everything safe and familiar into an ability also to order and sustain daily life, at least for the docile peasants within the walls of spreading

Indic religions. From an apostle of universal destruction the deity becomes an apostle of unquestioning obedience, from radical to apparent conservative (Ovesen, Trankell and Ojendal 1996, pp. 36–38; for a similar transformation of religion into a buttress of the Thai state, see Ishii 1993). Though established by violence that its victims and perpetrators alike could imagine as Gobar, Karey, Nkuu’ or Rudra, “[p]ower could be part of the cosmic order” (Pye 1985, p. 93), manifest in four-armed Śiva holding together the four corners of the world (Pucci 1992, p. 27).

Elsewhere I have also listed some similarities between the deities in the Chinese Ministry of Storms and the thunder deities of India and Southeast Asia. There is even a hint of the blood sacrifice in an otherwise anomalous Chinese myth (Dentan 2002a, pp. 206–7). I refer the reader to my earlier discussion of this complicated topic. What I want to look at here in conclusion is a subtler, more elusive commonality between these religious traditions.

4. Summary and Conclusion

Most of us...are naturally more sanguine and hopeful than logic would justify. We seem to be so constituted that in the absence of any facts to go upon we are happy and self-satisfied; so that the effect of experience is continually to contract our hopes and aspirations. Yet a lifetime of the application of this corrective does not usually eradicate our sanguine disposition. Where hope is unchecked by any experience, it is likely that our optimism is extravagant.

Peirce (1877, p. 3)

Intellectuals tend to treat such traditions as intellectual artifacts, the sort of data with which they are comfortable. To hammers, everything looks like a nail. Geoffrey Benjamin’s (2014) brilliant analysis of Temiar religion as a theological system and Kirk and Karen Endicott’s exhaustive presentation of Batek religion as a belief system exemplify the best of this approach, which is rooted in the tradition of British social anthropology (Endicott 1979a; Endicott and Endicott 2008). More relevant here, perhaps is Lye Tuck-Po’s (2004) brilliant ethnography of

Batek Semang, which, at the request of her Batek collaborators, she casts as a warning from the Thunder God Gobar to the peoples destroying the rainforest, that wanton “development” will provoke unimaginable punitive catastrophe.

My analysis by contrast is of a shared emotional response to existence. Indeed, “Existence” (*bhava*) is another name for Rudra (Doniger O’Flaherty 1975, p. 50). The “natural symbols” of storm and blood evoke that response, call it existential dread. Like our intelligentsia, the original peoples of Southeast Asia sought to impose intellectual order on the world in which they lived. But they knew that now and then the dark reality onto which human schemes seek to impose order billows up and overpowers them; drowns them and blows them away; and there is nothing anyone can do about it: “the first blast of nature’s verity will bring them down, houses of cards that they are” (Peirce 1901, p. 68). The fragility of the world that humans construct was not an intellectual postulate for them but a matter of observation, as was their own powerlessness. The boogeyman god—laughable, ambiguous, cruel, ambivalent, mindless, chaotic, dark and cold—that is the world, not the orderly, predictable, comprehensible fantasy of sheltered modern intellectuals or Hindu potentates shielded from nature’s verity. Rudra’s rage stems from the differentiation of primordial Unity in Creation, which is a trope for the human division of experience into intellectually accessible categories; Rudra’s goal, like Nkuu’s, is to bring back primordial “darkness covered by darkness” (Kramrisch 1981, p. 20).

In this context, talking about people with this sort of egalitarian small-scale social organization as if their theological impulses were consciously serried like those of, say, Sir Thomas Browne, can be misleading, especially when dealing with impulses like dread and mockery in situations of existential peril and epistemological ambiguity. Words are shabby equipment, constantly deteriorating, to apprehend this sort of phenomenon. But let us try, at risk, to paraphrase Bai Juyi’s Confucian dig at Laozi’s Daoism, of taking 5,000 words to argue that words are useless.

I suggest that the perceptual experience of a thunder squall is the equivalent on an emotional-cognitive level of the conceptual experience

of Indian *samsāra* (Beals 1962, pp. 49, 50) or Chinese *hundun*, chaos, the Void, on an intellectual level. The Daoist (or Buddhist) formulation is, in Nietzsche's dichotomy, Apollonian, Platonic, abstract; the Austroasiatic unformulation seems Dionysian, shamanic, and overwhelmingly concrete. The difference seems to lie in the rise of class society, which allows some people—and some peoples—to live their lives sheltered from the unmediated world. The lyric poets of the Tang Dynasty understood that life in the gated communities of the urban world was different from ordinary life.

朱门酒肉臭 *zhū mén jiǔ ròu chòu*
路有冻死骨 *lù yǒu dòng sǐ gǔ*

“Inside the gates uneaten wine and meat rot/
Outside people starve to death”

(Du Fu, Dentan gloss)

Imagining the collapse of cognitive categories and the slippage of everything known into meaninglessness in one's monastic retreat on the slopes of Tai Shan can leave one serene and prepared to abandon all striving as meaningless. Experiencing the apparent dissolution of the world as Semang and related peoples did is more thoroughgoing a mental cleansing and leaves one not serene but in panic. I use the word “panic” deliberately here, because it seems to have originated in a similar experience of being overwhelmed by the immensity and indifference of the great god Pan, “Everything”, in the trackless forests of ancient Greece. The unmediated world, *hundun*, makes no sense and cares nothing for people. Without differentiation by human imagination and differentiating, “chaos is not even chaos... it is blank nothing” (Peirce 1960, p. 98). Panic is not a particularly primitive response to that enormous empty indifference. Nor is amusement at its inhuman stupidity.

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3

TANTRISM “SEEN FROM THE EAST”

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An isolated feature of the incomplete picture of an ancient epoch, full of gaps as it may be, may not convey any meaning to us, but if we find it again at a later epoch just as a part of an organic whole, we can conclude its being a similar part of an organic whole at the ancient epoch, only perhaps in an earlier stage of development.

Hermann Oldenberg (1973, p. 43)

The original form of Hindu spirituality would have been a spirituality of “Spirit Beings”.

David Gordon White (2012, p. 165)

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1. Introduction

This chapter intends to raise the question as to whether the socio-religious movement we now call “Tantrism” may represent a wider Monsoon Asian areal phenomenon, with roots in a past that predates the earliest available textual data. It has been directly inspired by, and it engages with, three thought-provoking essays by anthropologist Robert Dentan on a common religious base in South and Southeast Asia (2002*a*, 2002*b*, this volume).² As a scholar trained in Sanskrit and Classical Indology focusing on the adoption of Indic religions across Southeast Asia, I intend to take up the challenge cast by Dentan, namely that “speculative reconstruction of Semai theological history... suggests that serious students of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Daoism, need to pay attention to the indigenous religions of Peninsular Malaysia” (2002*b*, p. 207).

I begin the discussion by surveying the historiographical parameters concerning the complex process of cultural and religious transfer between premodern South and Southeast Asia, and the origin of Tantrism. Next, I revisit the idea, advanced by early twentieth-century French scholarship, of a shared cultural matrix in Monsoon Asia, within which framework Dentan’s hypothesis may be situated. I then move to review Dentan’s main argument that a comparison of similar religious tropes found in the late Vedic tradition and in the oral lore of the Austroasiatic language-speaking ethnic group of the Semai in Peninsular Malaysia would suggest a common ancestry. By taking into account additional evidence from premodern and modern South Asian, Javano-Balinese, and Malay contexts, I suggest that many of the similarities detected by Dentan extend to the post-Vedic period, i.e. to Tantric Śaivism and Tantric Buddhism in the mediaeval or post-Gupta period (ca. 500–1300 CE).

My main thesis is that phenomena that are perceived by current scholarship as being either “Indic” or “local”/“indigenous” in nature were in fact already shaped by multi-directional and supra-local circulatory

² In choosing the title of this chapter, and with respect to its pivotal conceptual issues, I have also been inspired by the essays “India seen from the East: Indian and Indigenous Cults in Champa” by Paul Mus (1975 [1933]) and “Construction Sacrifice in India ‘Seen from the East’” by Roy Jordaan and Robert Wessing (1999).

dynamics; therefore, a perspective transcending the current paradigm is required to make sense of their genesis and transfer over a long period of time. Because of the complexity of the issues at stake here, and the vastness of this field of enquiry, my investigation is preliminary; rather than answering all the pressing questions, it only intends to provoke discussion and point at possible directions for future study.

2. Indic Religions and Premodern Dynamics of Globalization

Having discussed some uncanny similarities between the Vedic “outsider God” Rudra and Nkuu’, the “Dark Lord” of the Semai, Dentan (2002b, pp. 219–20) suggests that the two figures,

rather than being respectively ancestor and descendent, are cousins, developments of a primordial religion that stretched at least from eastern India to southern China.... If students of Hinduism and Buddhism want to familiarize themselves with pre-Aryan religion, it might be useful for them to spend some time with the indigenous religions of Malaysia, which, rather than being ‘primitive’ or ‘bizarre’, may represent a parallel development from a common base; and be closer to that base than theologies elaborated by generations of professional theologians.

The key hypothesis revisited by Dentan, i.e. that premodern Monsoon Asia shared a common ancestral religious matrix, was advanced by the French savants Jean Przyluski, Sylvain Lévi and Paul Mus in the first half of the twentieth century. This wider-ranging Monsoon Asia areal approach appears to have lost ground in the second half of the century to the advantage of more context-specific regional approaches to the study of premodern cultural and religious phenomena across South and Southeast Asia, which focus on regions and/or nation-states, and emphasize local genius and cultural specificity. Whenever supra-local (“cosmopolitan”) cultural phenomena are taken into account, they have been nearly always described through the lens of the Indic and Sanskritic high culture—as opposed to a (by definition) “local” or indigenous (i.e. *deśi*) culture. With respect to the religious history of the Indian Subcontinent, this tendency has resulted in a widespread scholarly opinion regarding Classical Hinduism, and Tantrism, as mainly orthogenetic

developments from a Vedic and Brahmanical matrix, enriched by influences from local or regional cults of South Asia. Indic religions of Southeast Asia are usually described in terms of either local religions featuring varying degrees of Indic influences, or Indic religions featuring varying degrees of local adaptation. The problem of directionality and historical influence, hence the question of Southeast Asian agency in the spread of ideas and practices to South Asia, has rarely—if ever—been raised; furthermore, Southeast Asia has been usually regarded as peripheral—at most a crossroads, or passive receiver, of Indic cults.

According to Dentan, older—yet still prevalent—views regarding Hinduism (and Śaivism) as a pot-pourri of beliefs and practices accumulated from all periods of South (and Southeast) Asian history need to be revisited. Such views (see, for example, Cady 1964, pp. 36–37) maintained that Śaivism, in both South and Southeast Asia, absorbed in a selective way “primitive cults of fertility” and of the Mother, Sun worship, etc., embedding (autochthonous) spirit-cults and what are often called “shamanic” practices. Dentan’s study, on the other hand, “fleshes out and modifies the old theory that Indian ideology, particularly Śaivism, found an ‘easy accommodation’ with Southeast Asian religions because of syncretic Hindu praxis back in India” (2002*a*, p. 157). Dentan rather suggests a contrary—yet multi-faceted—process, i.e. one that involved

the slow internal differentiation of an unformalized and unnamed aboriginal religion which spread throughout south and southeast Asia; its resultant differentiation into diverse forms in India and... the mountainous interior of Peninsular Malaysia; and a subsequent convergence in the first millenium AD as Indian traders, princes and missionaries introduced their Hindu and Buddhist modifications of the original religions into the area. (ibid.).

Dentan (ibid., p. 155) challenges his readers with a series of questions, then offers a preliminary answer:

What kinds of similarities were there between the Indian Motherland and the peoples of Malaysia? What ways did knowledge flow? Perhaps, in the figure of the monstrous God of Beasts, who taught humans magic, we moderns can discern the foreshadow of globalization.

Discussions of premodern dynamics of globalization in the wide geographical area spanning from Northwestern India to insular Southeast Asia can be subsumed under the abundant literature on “Indianization”, which has been briefly surveyed in the introduction to this volume. Here suffices it to point out that religious history has often been left out of the picture. This is the case, for instance, of the compelling hypothesis on a “Sanskrit Cosmopolis” elaborated by Sheldon Pollock (1996, 2006), which covers the expression of aesthetics of politics through first Sanskrit and then cosmopolitan vernaculars, yet glosses over the most widespread and long-lasting of all religions spread over South and Southeast Asia in the mediaeval period: Śaivism. Alexis Sanderson (2009) has produced a masterful study on what he has termed the “Śaiva age”, the geographical extent of which largely coincides with that of Pollock’s Sanskrit Cosmopolis. Sanderson presents detailed text-historical evidence on the rise and dominance of this religion in the Indian Subcontinent and “peripheral” areas, such as Southeast Asia, in the mediaeval period; however—and understandably so, given the paucity of evidence—Sanderson does not adequately address the question of its genesis (as we shall see, this question may be connected with the predominance of Śaivism throughout Monsoon Asia, namely its penetration into all stratas of societies and not just among the elites). Ronald Davidson (2002) and Geoffrey Samuel (2008) have delved into the question of the genesis of Tantric Buddhism and Tantric Śaivism, discussing social dynamics in which “subaltern/marginal” or “foreign/indigenous” agents and milieux played a role, yet have only marginally taken into account Southeast Asia. In an excellent study on what he calls a “Demonological cosmopolis”, David White (2012) investigates the supra-local nature of Tantric phenomena attested over much of Asia; “looking west”, he hypothesizes an Iranian/Central Asian origin for several widespread Tantric tropes. In this light, an evaluation of Dentan’s theories against the background of recent developments in the fields of Indology and Tantric studies seems now in order.

3. The Quest for Origins: History (and Geography) of Tantrism

Before reviewing Dentan's hypothesis about a possible shared religious matrix, I would like to define my main subject of enquiry, i.e. "Tantrism", and discuss its genesis in its (posited) homeland, namely the Indian Subcontinent. Tantrism is a complex term, used both emically (*tantra*, *tantrasāstra*, and the adj. *tāntrika*) and etically as a catch-all category to refer to an equally complex socio-religious phenomenon. According to Gavin Flood's definition (2006, p. 9), "The term *tantra* as a noun is a term of self-description that refers to specific texts of revelation and is also a term designating a system of revealed teaching that leads to liberation and power". The phenomenon of Tantrism has been a vehicle for cultural transfer, and indeed it encompasses disparate beliefs and practices, soteriological and ritual systems, and their related cultural manifestations across much of South, Central, Southeast, and East Asia.

These phenomena or orientations, occurring across religious divides (i.e. Śaiva, Buddhist, Vaiṣṇava, and even Jaina) in both elite and lay milieux, featured elements of initiation and secrecy; empowerment and divinization with the assistance of psycho-physical techniques and/or magico-ritual procedures (e.g. mantras, *yantras*, and *maṇḍalas*); transgression of social, sexual, and dietary norms; worship of wrathful deities; ritual violence; possession and exorcism; and different genres of sacred performance. As argued by Urban (1999, p. 126),

'Tantra' is not something that can be defined as a singular, unified category; rather, it can only be described by means of what J.Z. Smith calls a 'polythetic classification', in which 'large number of characteristics are possessed by a large number of class members'.

Although it is hardly possible to formulate a comprehensive working definition of the elusive "Tantric", I believe that on the basis of the ever-growing body of scholarship produced in the past three or so decades, and by applying a polythetic approach (see Landmann, this volume), it is legitimate to posit a complex, distinctive, and eminently cross-cultural phenomenon comprising several of the above features. This phenomenon

developed in its most distinctive forms around the first half of the first millennium CE, and eventually spread to many socio-cultural and religious milieux across Asia (and Monsoon Asia in particular).³

The vexed question concerning the (socio-)historical origin of Tantrism has dominated the scholarly debate since the inception of the academic study of Indian religions. Two general paradigms may be identified: heterogenetic vs. orthogenetic. The former, which is the earlier, envisages a non- or pre-Aryan origin of Tantrism (and especially its feminine-oriented currents, subsumed under the category of “Śāktism”), and “Classical” or “post-Vedic” Hinduism at large, by positing a contact between an imported (adstratal) Vedic religion and a pre-existing cultic substratum in the Indian Subcontinent.⁴ Various cultural and geographical origins of this pre-Aryan substratum have been proposed, i.e. Dravidian (Conze 1975, p. 178), Austric (including “Negrito” and Malayo-Polynesian),⁵ shamanic (whether Central Asian or not, see Eliade 1971 and Samuel 2005), Harappan (Basham 1954, p. 23, Bhattacharyya 1999, pp. 156–60), “folk” (Hardy 1983, p. 141), or

³ Not unreasonably, Urban (2003, p. 27) warns against the anachronistic projection of the abstract category of “Tantrism” onto premodern traditions, arguing that Tantrism is a modern construct that arose, like Hinduism, from the dialectical encounter between Indians and Western Orientalists. Yet, the existence of “Tantras” and distinctive discourses concerning them in the premodern period, both within and without South Asia, cannot be denied. Furthermore, the terms “Tantrism”/“Tantric” aptly capture the apparently common milieu of ritual practice characterizing both Śaivism and Buddhism (as well as other religious streams) in the mediaeval period.

⁴ An offshoot of this debate is, for instance, whether yoga developed within a Vedic milieu or as a result of the influx of non-Vedic (i.e. shamanic, or even Chinese/Daoist) psycho-physical practices (see Eliade 1971; Samuel 2008, p. 84).

⁵ For instance, S.K. Chatterjee (1965, p. 153) refers to “certain remarkable agreements between the cosmogony of the Polynesians and that of the Nāsadiya hymn in the Ṛg Veda (X.129)”, and to some astronomical ideas and terminology, e.g. the enumeration of the days by the phases of the moon, the “Austric” names for the two phases of the moon, the creation of the world from an egg, and Nāga-lore (see *ibid.*, pp. 149–67 for a wider discussion of Austro-Asiatic and Austronesian loan-words and cultural tropes). Some of these views are clearly the product of the nationalistic milieu of the Greater India Society, and have been long since discredited.

tribal ($\approx$ “local”, “autochthonous”, or “indigenous”).⁶ As a reaction to this trend of thought, an orthogenetic model has gained popularity in the past two or three decades, which regards Classical Hinduism on the one hand, and Tantrism on the other, as a direct development of Vedic religious ideology and Indo-Aryan (magico-)ritual praxis.⁷ Championing an orthogenetic model, Flood (2006, p. 14) offers the following synthesis:

There is much speculation about the origins of Tantrism. On the one hand the origins have been seen in an autochthonous spirituality or Shamanism that reaches back to pre-Aryan times in the subcontinent, yet textual historical evidence only dates from a more recent period. While certainly there are elements in tantric traditions that may well reach back into pre-history—particularly the use of skulls and the themes of death and possession*—we simply do not have sufficient evidence to speculate in this way. As Robert Mayer has shown, there is no evidence for a non-Aryan substratum for Tantrism, which must be understood as a predominantly Brahmanical, Sanskritic tradition with its roots in the Veda. In an important book on the origins of Indian civilisation, Sergent has argued that our main resources for understanding the past are linguistic

⁶ See, for example, van Gulik (1935, p. 4), Tucci (1949, p. 216), and Beane (1977, p. 37ff.). More recently, Vidya Dehejia (1986, p. 1) has argued that the Kaula Tantric tradition has “roots outside the fold of Brahmanical Hinduism” and “deep connections with tribal traditions” (of Orissa, Eastern India, etc.). For recent discussions of the “tribal hypothesis”, see Davidson (2002, pp. 211–14) and Samuel (2005, p. 410); cf. Urban 2011. White (2012, pp. 1s64–65) includes the “local or regional cults of *yakṣas*, *devatās*, *bhūtas*, and the like” in the substratal traditions that ought to be taken into account when reckoning the origins of and influences on “Tantric demonology—which is the foundation upon which all of the magnificent Tantric systems and hierarchies that Hindu Tantra specialists study are grounded”.

⁷ A “strong” orthogenetic model has been championed also by Biardeau and Heesterman, among others, while scholars like Dumont, Eliade and Olivelle, have advanced a “weak” orthogenetic model, which posits a process of “challenge and assimilation” in which new models and approaches, not necessarily emerging from within the Vedic context, are confronted and incorporated more or less successfully” (Samuel 2008, p. 160). To Samuel, the “‘orthogenetic’ approach offers elegance and closure, but it lacks a certain degree of realism, especially given that the logic of Vedic thought and practice is such that new developments are regularly incorporated through the use of resources already present within the tradition”.

and archaeological. There is no early archaeological evidence for tantric traditions beyond the common era, and while there is textual evidence for a cremation ground asceticism as far back as the time of the Buddha, as well as tantric-like goddesses in the Veda, the specificity of the tantric revelation appears more recently in the history of South Asia.

In footnote (*), Flood adds that "There are spiritual practices, such as breathing techniques, in both East and West that may share a common heritage and probably reach back into prehistory" (referring to Eliade 1971, pp. 104–7 and La Barre 1974, pp. 404–6).

Urban (1999, p. 126) asserts that the history of Tantrism is impossible to write because of poverty of data at present, and that "the most we can say is that, although Dravidian or pre-Aryan origins may be possible, Tantric traditions have clear relations to the Vedic tradition as well". Along similar lines, White elaborates a synthesis between an orthogenetic and heterogenetic approach (2000, p. 18), contextualizing the historical origin of Tantrism as follows:

Tantra was an orthogenic development out of prior mainstream (but not necessarily elite) traditions, that nonetheless also drew on both foreign (adstratal) and popular (substratal) sources.

Brighenti (2009, pp. 63–64), while discussing the question of the origins of the mediaeval Śākta practices of human sacrifice, argues that

this process of cultural interaction, out of which the whole Tantric religious complex has originated, had as its vectors the 'people of the Veda' on the one hand, and people of disparate ethnic origins (Dravidian, Austro-Asiatic, Austronesian and Tibeto-Burman) on the other.... I regard the Śākta ritual to be the final outcome of a long process of cultural syncreticism through the development, contact, and combination of diverse ethnocultural streams.

Elaborating on the controversial issue of the origins of Rudra-Śiva, the "outsider god" of the Vedic pantheon, Peter Bisschop (2013) takes a cautious stance:

The question of Śiva's cultural background is one that has received much attention from scholars past and present.... A central issue at stake here

is whether Śiva stems from a vedic (Aryan) or a nonvedic (non-Aryan, Dravidian) background. The debate revolves around the question of whether the deity Rudra, thought to be Śiva's predecessor in the Vedas, is essentially an outsider or an insider to the vedic pantheon.... The issue of the true background of Rudra remains unresolved, but the complex nature of Śiva himself most probably points to a *complex cultural background in which both vedic and extra-vedic elements have played a role*. (emphasis mine)

The matter is still far from being settled, and chances are it never will. Yet, it is interesting to note that, in spite of the fact that so many blank spots remain, the “Indian” origin of Tantrism is hardly ever questioned, being taken for granted as an axiom by most scholars. Whenever “peripheral” areas such as Southeast Asia or the Himalayan region are worked into scholarly account, “India”—as if it was a monolithic and clearly defined entity!—is invariably seen as the cradle of “Indic” religious and cultural phenomena, and other areas as the “borrowers”. Yet, if one looks at the emic accounts, i.e. those found in the mediaeval Tantric texts from South Asia and Tibet, one notes a fascination for the “foreign” and the “exotic”. This fascination is articulated through the attribution of the origin of Tantric cults to either tribal milieux or peripheral, far away lands.⁸ Davidson's (2002) reflections on South Asian Esoteric or Tantric Buddhism (and related Hindu traditions) are instructive here. Davidson (*ibid.*, p. 226) notes that

the obscure words of coded language found in the *Hevajra-tantra* and elsewhere are often designated ‘foreign speech’ (*mleccha-bhāṣā*) or ‘the language of Oḍḍiyāna’.... ‘foreign’ in early medieval India did not simply

⁸ Several of the major Tantric seats were in regions at the “margins” of the Indic world, for example Kāmarūpa (Assam), Oḍḍiyāna (either Central Asia/the Northwestern part of the Indian Subcontinent, or South India), Śrīśailam (in a Southeastern Indian, prevalently tribal area); compare the Tibetan fascination with Shambhala, or the attribution of the origin of certain doctrines or schools to remote lands, such as Suvarṇadvīpa (Java or Sumatra, in the case of the Kālacakra system revealed to Atīṣa by Piṇḍo/Kaiki Śrīpāla) or Mahācīna (in the case of a transgressive form of Tārā). See White 2000, p. 18, and Samuel 2008, p. 84ff; for examples of Tantric teachers from tribal milieux, see Davidson 2002, p. 228.

designate ‘extraterritorial’. As a term, it also applied to the plethora of tribal peoples found throughout the areas now known as Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa, Gujarat, Konkana, Bengal, Assam, Kashmir, and Swat—precisely in all the strongholds of esoteric Buddhism.

A controversial point in the debate is the dichotomy between “Sanskritic” and “tribal”—a dichotomy that is also relevant to the present discussion of Dentan’s hypothesis. In both South and Southeast Asian contexts, the problem of directionality and historical influence remains crucial. Having pointed out that “it is not easy to see how an orally based, hunter-gatherer culture is directly related to religious scriptures (tantras) that are generated in an agrarian society”, Davidson (*ibid.*, p. 225) concludes that tribal peoples were aggressively Hinduized since the early mediaeval period, and this Hinduization included the appropriation of tribal deities, rituals, and cultic sites. In short, Davidson suggests that complex interactions between Tantric practitioners and members of indigenous communities were going on in South Asia, and speaks of a two-way process, which illuminates the phenomenon of cross-fertilization between Sanskritic and tribal religions. To him, these trajectories brought a strong “sense of affiliation” between Tantric Buddhist (or Śaiva) ascetics, generally labelled Siddhas, and the “peoples of the forest” (*ibid.*, p. 227).

Reasoning along similar lines, Samuel (2005) associates Tantra (especially in its Tibetan Buddhist variety) with what he calls “shamanism”.⁹ Samuel defines Vajrayāna Buddhism as a “sophisticated version of Shamanism” (2005, p. 74), for elements of Vajrayāna ritual are

⁹ The caveat here is that Samuel (2005, p. 11) uses “shamanic” (and “shaman, shamanism”) as analytic categories of mediumship that do not imply any historical association with the category of Siberian shamanism. To him, a shaman is a “shapeshifter, in the sense of someone who moves between different roles or *personae*”; “the symbolic entities used in shamanic procedures in many small-scale societies... could be seen as shared cultural resources facilitating these shifts and alterations, shifts which affected both mind and body, both the individual and their social group. Shamanic practitioners operate with these spirits or with analogous symbolic identities”. I conform to this usage throughout my essay.

similar to certain practices of mediumship, which could partly account for its origins. Blaming a restrictive and typological fashion in which shamanism has often been treated, he encourages a more polythetic approach in the study of such practices as healing, exorcism, divination, and spirit mediumship involved in the transformation of consciousness. He suggests that the basic structure of Tantric (Vajrayāna) ritual can be found, besides in Sanskrit texts and their Tibetan translations, also “in the surviving traditions of Tantric practice of Japan, Bali and the Newar population of the Kathmandu valley”, thereby betraying an apparent Indian origin (p. 77). Samuel opens to the possibility that “siddha lineages include a number of figures that might be regarded as ‘tribal’ in origin”, and that “it is tempting to look to tribal populations as sources of the shamanic aspects of the Vajrayāna, since the tribal people of today certainly preserve elements of shamanic practice (Rahmann 1959)”, whose idiom however “does not seem particularly close to that of Vajrayāna shamanism” (p. 86). Urban, in his discussion of the rise of Tantra in Northeastern India (2011), notes that the situation “most likely involved a more subtle *interaction, negotiation, and mutual transformation* between brāhmanic and local non-Hindu traditions” (emphasis original),¹⁰ and that Śākta Tantra in Assam “is largely the result of a long, historical negotiation between Sanskritic traditions and the indigenous kings who patronised them, almost all of whom came from the non-Hindu tribes of the northeast hills” (p. 232).

Turning to a more historical endeavour, Samuel (2008, p. 343) senses a tension or opposition between Vedic-Brahmanical culture in the Northern Indian region of Kuru-Pāñcāla and the surrounding belt of cities and states in the Central Gangetic region and the Deccan.

¹⁰ Urban here follows “the lead of Wendy Doniger, who suggests that the development of Hinduism as a whole in South Asia was not simply a process of Sanskritisation, that is, the absorption of non-Hindu traditions into the brāhmanic system; rather, it also involved a process of ‘Deshification’, that is, the influence of local (*deshi*) and indigenous cultures on brāhmanic religion and the mutual interaction between Sanskritic and *deshi* traditions”. To both scholars, it would appear that these *deśi* traditions are “local” or autochthonous by definition, i.e. themselves not the result of supralocal dynamics.

Bringing in connections with other regions of India, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia, Samuel frames the question of origin not as the contrast between indigenous people and “Aryan invaders”, but rather in terms of a cultural opposition (i.e., a pastoralist warrior-chieftain culture vs. an agrarian culture having elements of the philosopher and the renunciate) between genetically mixed populations already speaking mostly Indo-Aryan languages.

The above-mentioned historical narrative reminds us of that advanced by Johannes Bronkhorst in his “Greater Magadha hypothesis”. Bronkhorst (2007) argues that Brahmanism did not constitute the background in which Buddhism arose, for while Brahmanism was the dominant ideology in the region centred on the Doab of the rivers Ganga and Yamuna, Buddhism arose in the region to the east of the confluence of these two rivers (“Greater Magadha”), which had a different culture and ideology. Vedic and early post-Vedic literature contains little information about the culture of its eastern neighbours, yet early Brahmanical literature contains sparse evidence, such as references to demonic “people from the east” constructing sepulchral mounds, whose later embodiments might be the Buddhist stūpas (Bronkhorst 2007, pp. 4–5). While Bronkhorst does not attempt to comprehensively unpack the historical, genetic, and sociolinguistic aspects of the Aryan/Brahmanical vs. Non-Aryan/non-Brahmanical divide, some promising findings by John Peterson suggest that an overlap may have existed between the cultural and linguistic (i.e., Munda/Austroasiatic vs. Indo-Aryan) boundary of “Greater Magadha”.¹¹

An issue that has been subject of much scholarly controversy, and that directly bears on the genesis and development of Classical Hinduism, Tantric Buddhism and Tantric Śaivism in South Asia, is that of a “pan-Indian religious substratum”. The idea of an early religious substratum was (re-)elaborated by David Seyfort Ruegg

¹¹ I thank John Peterson for having discussed his findings and their relation with Bronkhorst’s theory in a series of emails, and for having shared with me an unpublished paper (Peterson forthcoming). See also below, pp. 105–6.

(1964, 2008), who advocated a common cultic stock that would *ex hypothesi* form the common source from which both Śaiva and Bauddha Tantric traditions derived, and to which they ultimately owe their shared common elements. This “substratum model”, which is theoretically and historically neutral towards the problem of pre-Aryan or non-Aryan elements (ibid. 2008, pp. 41, 90),¹² has been criticized by Alexis Sanderson (1994, 2001), mainly on account of its being an abstract and unverifiable, i.e. purely inferred, concept or entity. Sanderson himself has advanced a paradigm that has been later labelled by his readers as a “borrowing model”. Sanderson’s research on Sanskrit primary sources of the Śaiva Mantramārga and the Bauddha Yogatantra has highlighted the divide between the two traditions, and justified the common elements on the grounds of a great deal of mutual influences, or even manifest plagiarism, occurring between both systems—but especially the incorporation of materials of the former (and arguably earlier) textual corpus into the latter.

A negative stance against the quest for origins has been taken by Christian Wedemeyer (2013), according to whom a “consistent appeal to origins would (and, in fact, practically does) make the study of Tantric Buddhism impossible” (p. 34). Championing an orthogenetic approach, Wedemeyer has criticized the “tribal hypothesis” by teasing out formal fallacies in the approach of Davidson and others. According to Wedemeyer, a notion that would characterize “much of contemporary thought about the origin of the Tantras” is

that—even after the ascendancy of the Vedic cultural model—primordial, pre-Āryan religious currents continued to be practiced among ‘marginal’ communities that included primitive groups such as India’s so-called ‘tribal’ population. (p. 21)

¹² Contrast Hardy (1983, p. 141), who explains a number of close similarities between the manifestations of “folk religion” in the northern and southern areas of the Indian Subcontinent “by postulating a very archaic and universally Indian form of popular religion of non-Āryan origin”.

Having criticized this view, Wedemeyer does not provide a truly compelling alternative either.¹³ He does not do full justice to the complexity of the issue at stake when he claims that militating against this view is the absence of "any literary evidence for these supposed traditions and their communities", and that the best evidence "that can be marshaled are vague and ambiguous traces such as busy Harrappan [sic] terra-cottas, sanguinary rites of tribal groups, or speculations on the non-Āryan elements in the secret tantric codes" (ibid., p. 197). Although Wedemeyer is right in stressing that tribals have in the past been too often naively perceived—in a Taylolean fashion—as bearers of a timeless, primordial, and "primitive" culture, it seems nonetheless unreasonable to rule out the fact that relatively isolated non-literate small-scale communities (such as the Semai of peninsular Malaysia) may have been more stable than others, and may thus have preserved distinctive, and remarkably resilient, cultural traits alongside foreign (i.e. Indic or Islamic) influences.

However useful they are to capture the elusive dynamics that shaped the South Asian religious discourse in the mediaeval period, all the above approaches do not fully address the question of their ultimate origin, nor explain why cross-fertilization seems to have taken place in such a productive manner—in spite of the caveat expressed by Davidson about the difficult-to-explain relation between orally-based hunter-gatherer cultures and religious scriptures produced in agrarian societies;¹⁴ at the same time, they limit their main scope to South Asia and Tibet,

¹³ His dismissal, along Sanderson's lines, of the "religious substratum model" on the ground of the absence of evidence is somewhat simplistic, reducing the issue to either a "devilishly clever" eradication of traces of primitive forms of Tantrism by the assimilating traditions (e.g. Śaivism, Buddhism, etc.), which he considers unlikely, or a total eradication by historical, cultural, economic, or other circumstances, which he considers a more cogent explanation, especially because "[t]hese postulated preassimilated forms of Tantrism were allegedly practiced by marginal, illiterate tribals, without the skills and finances necessary to leave lasting traces such as texts, statues, and inscriptions" (Wedemeyer 2013, p. 197).

¹⁴ This is all the more pertinent in the case of Southeast Asia. It is worth reminding that that the oldest Sanskrit inscriptions from the region (ca. sixth century CE) are found in a remote area of present-day Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo), which is populated by small-scale societies.

leaving Southeast Asia largely out of the picture. It is, therefore, high time to revive the quest for the origins of Tantrism from a wider geographical and historical perspective, and by making use of a comparative methodology. In revisiting the issue of a pan-Indian religious substratum—or, rather, of a shared cultural matrix—one may wonder, along with Dentan, whether this inferred matrix could have been part of an ancestral areal phenomenon that extended outside the borders of the Subcontinent, across what is now Southeast Asia, and perhaps even Southern China.¹⁵

4. A Shared Cultural Matrix in Monsoon Asia?

While surveying the scholarship on the “Indianization” of Southeast Asia in the past half a century or so, one notes a shift from a trans-local, “Greater India” perspective, to a more Southeast Asia-centred approach. This shift reflects new geopolitical scenarios, the compartmentalization of knowledge through an Area Studies approach in global academe, and the need to counteract the India-centric approach of earlier generations of scholars by attributing a greater agency to Southeast Asian people.

Yet, before the Greater India perspective became popular, French Indologists Jean Przyluski and Sylvain Lévi in the 1920s hypothesized the existence of a cultural substratum—labelled “Austroasiatic” (or “Austrie”)—common to South, Southeast, and parts of East Asia (Coedès 1968, pp. 8–9; 1944, pp. 8–9). An ancestral Austroasiatic/Austrie/Proto-Malay culture or civilization was inferred on the basis of evidence from linguistics, mythology, art history, and archaeology. This culture or civilization would have been characterized by the cult of ancestors, the worship of gods on high places, the figure of the “Lord of the Land”,¹⁶ similar funerary practices related to megalithic burials, matrilineal

¹⁵ While I believe that the southern part of China was closely involved in the cultural interactions that I am going to suggest, it has not been possible to include it in the present discussion, lest it assume unwieldy proportions. The same holds true for Papua New Guinea and Melanesia.

¹⁶ Cf. Wessing, this volume, on the theme of “Lord of the land” (*tuan tanah*) in Nusantara.

dualism, and structural analogies of myths; its technology would have included the use of complex irrigation systems for growing rice, and advanced skills in navigation. In the 1930s, Paul Mus elaborated on the idea of "Monsoon Asia" as an area characterized by an underlying cultural unity, which would explain the existence of some shared religious practices across it. According to Mus (1975, pp. 8–9 [1933]), through ethnography of the tribals of Vietnam,

it will be possible to start from the biased and relatively late evidence of the texts and work back to the ethnological conditions, or at any rate to social and religious conditions strictly anterior to the literary compilations. It will thus be possible gradually to restore many of the antecedents that have been subordinated and submerged by the brahmanical or confucian importations.

Further, Mus (1975, pp. 8–9) hypothesized

[t]he existence, in ancient times, of a certain unity of culture throughout an extensive zone in which India, Indo-China, Indonesia, a Pacific islands fringe and doubtless southern China are to be united.... whenever sea lanes establish communication, it is reasonable to expect a cultural unity, and it makes more sense to speak of a religion of the monsoon zone of Asia than to speak of Indian religion, or Chinese religion, prior to the civilizations which were later to give meaning to these words.

Mus reminds us that, in such a culturally diverse and widespread geographical area, this hypothesized unity is bound to remain a relative unity, the ultimate origin of which has to be "reconstructed"; yet this relative unity is particularly true in the domain of religion. To him, the fundamentals of the religion of the monsoon zone of Asia lay in worship of the energies of the soil deified as god (or goddess), the belief in a primeval spirit/energy permeating the whole nature, and the institution of mediumship. Mus then directs our attention to the belief in a collective divinity without individual personality in the autochthonous religions of many Southeast Asian tribal groups, which would be due to "a level of abstraction marking the termination of an already extensive process of elaboration" (*ibid.*, p. 12).

Coedès (1968, p. 8), who passed to history for his view that Southeast Asian people, although already civilized, advanced in many domains as a consequence of peaceful cultural and commercial interactions with the Indians, embraced Przyluski's—in his words, “prudent formula”—that “during the second Bronze Age [in Europe], the Indo-Chinese peninsula entered the orbit of a maritime civilization comprising both the mainland and the archipelago of Southeast Asia”. Coedès added that, whatever its origin, this civilization might have touched Japan, given the relations in the realm of language, folklore and material culture going back to the prehistoric period.¹⁷ In a remarkable paragraph, he clearly espoused Mus' idea of Monsoon Asia as an integrated cultural area:

Indians were not confronted by naked ‘savages’ but, on the contrary, *by people endowed with a civilization that had traits in common with the civilization of pre-Aryan India*. The speed and ease with which the Aryanized Indians propagated their culture is undoubtedly explained in part by the fact that, in the customs and beliefs of these immigrants, *the natives discovered, under an Indian veneer, a base common to all of monsoon Asia*. (ibid., p. 15; emphasis mine)

This “cultural matrix along a broad band stretching from pre-Aryan India through Island and Mainland Southeast Asia into Southern China” would comprise wet rice technology, bronze (the Dongson drums), the important role of women in societies, and distinctive social and mythological features (Reynolds 1995, pp. 422–23).

Following a similar train of thought, Richard Winstedt in his *The Malay Magician, Being Shaman, Shaiva, and Sufi* (1961) invoked an ancestral “paganism” common to tribals from India, Southeast Asia, and China:

¹⁷ Cf. Coedès 1968, p. 8, fns. 50–52. Kumar (2009) has suggested ancient Southeast Asian, and in particular Javanese, linguistic and cultural influences on Japan in the late prehistoric era. On the similarities between Japanese and Javano-Balinese masks posited by Coldiron, cf. below.

Europeans not presented with the evidence of geography, history and religions have been apt to talk as if Malay magic were unique and indigenous. (p. 1)

The Malays... have accepted the idea of two great civilisations, the Hindu and the Muslim, without abandoning their own prehistoric paganism. *That paganism can be reconstructed directly from study of backward tribes in Assam, Indochina and the Malay archipelago and, viewed more widely, is of a piece with the paganism of all the races from Southern India to China.* What has been written of every Dravidian village is true of every Malay village. (p. 4; emphasis mine)

While the quote by Winstedt transpires a judgemental positivism, its underlying idea of a "translocal paganism" covering a wide geographical area from Southern India to China is tantalizing, and calls to mind a paragraph by Hutton (1928, pp. 406–7) on the similar religious practices and beliefs of small-scale societies of Assam, island Southeast Asia, and Melanesia:

Beliefs as to the soul in the Celebes differ little, if not at all, from those in Assam, and to read an account of a hill tribe in Borneo or the Philippines gives a Naga Hills reader a vivid impression of reading of some Naga tribe with whose general culture he is perfectly familiar, but whose acquaintance he has never made.... There seems to be a pretty clear cultural connection between the Naga Hills and Melanesia.

The idea of a shared cultural matrix across Monsoon Asia, however outdated, romanticizing and far-fetched it may sound nowadays, is not altogether dissimilar from the scenarios that more recent scholars have suggested on the basis of extensive empirical work and more sophisticated theoretical models. Cases in point are Blust's acceptance of the "Austic hypothesis" positing a genetic relationship between Austroasiatic and Austronesian languages, and locating the ancestral habitat of the Austic family "in the general region where the Salween, Mekong and Yangzi rivers run parallel on the Burma-Yunnan frontier" (1996, p. 136); Blench's (2013) individuation of linguistic and cultural correlates between Eastern India and Melanesia; Reuter's (2014) description of an "Ancestor Religion" widespread in the Austronesian

world and East Asia; and Brighenti's (2005) discussion of buffalo sacrifices and mortuary rituals in tribal cultures of Monsoon Asia.

A brief review of the literature on cultural transfers between South and Southeast Asia further illuminates my point. For instance, in declaring that "Indianization of Southeast Asia" is a "confusion of categories", Mabbett (1977a, 1977b) suggested that the dichotomy between an autonomous Southeast Asia and a civilizing Indian culture was a false one, and that the two areas already shared common socio-cultural traits. Gutman, in a fashion that is strongly remindful of Mus, argued that Arakanese society was particularly receptive to Indian religion because it "was familiar in its substratum of beliefs developed in the same monsoon-dominated environment" (1976, p. 320). At a later date, Chihara (1996, p. 7) posited a "substratum of pre-Aryan culture" shared between India and Southeast Asia, and surmised that "there were few fundamental differences between Indian civilisation and Southeast Asian civilisation, [so] the wave of Indianisation would seem to have penetrated Southeast Asian societies as if by osmosis". Wolters (1999 [1982]) regarded the Southeast Asian region—and that region only, unlike his predecessors—as a "broadly based community of outlook", characterized by a shared "cultural matrix".

A theory focusing on "convergence" rather than a shared matrix (or substratum) has been advanced by Kulke (1990, p. 24). Kulke suggested that "the socio-political development of Eastern India during the first half of the first millennium AD... resembles in many respects the development in parts of Southeast Asia", which in its turn is indicative of a socio-cultural convergence on both sides of the bay of Bengal. Kulke's model of convergence between South and Southeast Asia, which redefines the process of Indianization as a "misnomer", may be regarded as either implying a shared cultural matrix, which would have led to parallel developments starting from similar premises and ending in similar results, or as being the outcome of independent origination.

When trying to transcend the nowadays likely old-fashioned "Indianization" paradigm, contemporary scholarship has emphasized cosmopolitan phenomena, and entertained the possibility of convergences across South and Southeast Asia. Nonetheless, in spite of occasional

winkings towards the existence of a shared cultural matrix in early Monsoon Asia, it seems to me that scholars have been hesitant to seriously consider the implications connected with that paradigm, failing to carry its premises to their logical conclusions. Besides Dentan, few have attempted to move beyond the paradigm of Indic/Sanskritic vs. "local" and revive the idea of an integrated Monsoon Asia. A relevant case study is that by Roy Jordaan and Robert Wessing (1999) on human and animal sacrifice in South and Southeast Asia.¹⁸ Situating themselves within the track started by Mus, Jordaan and Wessing replied to Henk Bodewitz's challenging claim that construction sacrifice of humans had been unknown in India. Taking into account both ethnographic and textual data from various geographical areas of South Asia, Southeast Asia, and China, they pointed at the striking correspondences between construction sacrifice—which, in its Tantric form, might have involved human sacrifice—across Monsoon Asia and ritual prescriptions recommended by the Sanskrit *Śilpāśāstras*:

As Mus (1975:39) has argued, and as is borne out by the ethnographic literature (Wessing & Jordaan 1997), Indian usages can be seen as being but a local variant of practices once prevailing throughout 'Monsoon Asia', the difference between the Indian ones and the others lying in the fact that the former were infused with Vedic notions and later became doctrinized as 'Hinduism' (which itself is, of course, a cover term for a wide variety of beliefs and practices) while the others more or less remained folk practices.

Jordaan and Wessing (1999, p. 239)

As Jordaan and Wessing (ibid., p. 218) put it, paraphrasing Mus, "a study of the customs of present-day groups in Southeast Asia, like the Cham in Vietnam, could teach us more about the hidden, still continuing pre-Aryan cultural influences which have contributed to the form that Hinduism has taken". The desideratum put forward by these two scholars with respect to Hinduism and contemporary (ethnic) groups in Southeast Asia clearly resonates with that invoked by Dentan.

¹⁸ That book chapter in fact constitutes a sequel to earlier studies by the same authors, appeared in 1996 and 1997.

A similar view on the issue of “Indianization” has been advanced by John Emigh (1996) in his comparative study on Southeastern Indian (especially Orissan) and Javano-Balinese performance traditions and iconographic motifs. Emigh (1996, p. 96), in a series of striking paragraphs that are worth being quoted in full, attempted to go beyond the “(Indian/Tantric) influence” paradigm by positing a common ground for both areas:

What I am suggesting is that performative traditions, as well as linguistic and agricultural ones, may well have flowed south and west before returning towards the east; and that the Tantric traditions that took root in Bali may already have been nurtured in common ground. While independent invention is always a possibility, it is difficult to regard the dancing Shakti figures and not think of the ‘feminine’ *tubuan* coming from the wild *momboto* time in an act of visitation during mortuary rites of New Britain; on the gables of the men’s spirit houses in Iatmul villages, distant female cousins of the Kirtimukha and the guardian witch of Bali’s Goa Gajah can be found—tongues distended, horrific countenances in place.

We probably will not be able to fill in the blanks more precisely until further archaeological work is done to refine the nature of the trade contacts between South and Southeast Asia, a reassessment is made of the contributions of the Austro-Asiatic and Dravidian populations to ‘classical’ Indian culture in general, and more is known about the early cultural and historical links connecting the Indonesian archipelago to India, southern China, mainland Southeast Asia and Melanesia.

The current *calon arang*, like so many performative traditions, emerged after many passes from many directions, traces of which were kept and altered in a continuing process of accommodation, invention, and interpretation. It seems likely that both the Balinese *calon arang* and the Orissan Prahlada Nataka fundamentally grew out of related ritual and theatrical traditions connected to Shakti worship, and that these traditions were themselves made possible *by thousands of years of a partially shared prehistory*. (emphasis mine)

Emigh’s considerations on “thousands of years of a partially shared prehistory” as the catalyst for the emergence of mediaeval Tantric

ritual and performance traditions of South and Southeast Asia reminds us of Dentan’s idea of an ancestral horrific Dark Lord—and the complex of motifs revolving around him, including conceptions of power as female and bloody sacrifices—deriving from a common source rather than being (uniquely) an Indic “import”.

Scholar of performance Margaret Coldiron (2005*a*, 2005*b*) wonders whether a common origin can be postulated to explain the remarkable analogies between some masked theatrical characters in Japan and the Javano-Balinese world:

The masks are the dog/lions Shishi (Japan) and Barong (Bali), the witch-like Hannya (Japan) and Rangda (Bali), and the sacred old men Okina (Japan) and Sidha Karya (Bali). Whatever information exists concerning the sources of these masks is lost in the murky world of myth and legend, and the task of finding historical or archaeological evidence is further complicated by the ephemeral nature of the materials from which the masks are made, the paucity of documentary records concerning ritual and theatrical performance, and conflicting local traditions. The arguments I shall offer here are therefore speculations about matters for which there may be no definitive answers, but they form a part of my ongoing research into the possible source or sources of these images. Is there a cultural or historical link between them or is there some deeper, perhaps universal “source” for these archetypes that has given rise to such similar iconographic forms in these two quite separate cultures? (2005, p. 228)

Coldiron (2005*a*, p. 230) ventures to speculate that the similarities can be explained via a common (mediaeval) Tantric Buddhist source, or even via direct influence from Java.

Art Historian Natasha Reichle (2007, p. 157) discusses Batak religious lore as a case of convergence between imported Tantric cults and local beliefs. Quoting an account by Heine-Geldern on the central image at Bahal II at Padang Lawas, according to whom the worship of the fierce Heruka “formed a point of contact between the Indian and the indigenous rites... and gave impulse to the transformed interpretation of Batak cannibalism into a magic rite of degenerate Buddhism”, she claims that the Bataks readily recognized their old indigenous elements

and customs in Tantric rites (ibid., p. 159).¹⁹ As a case in point, she compares the iconography and function of skull-topped magic staff carried by Batak shamans and the *khaṭvāṅga* carried by Śaiva and Buddhist Tantric practitioners and their elected deity, Heruka/Śaṃbara—who, as Bosch theorized, was the “special deity of sorcerers” (ibid., p. 161), and who, according to Przyluski (1937), originated in a pre-Aryan, Munda (i.e. Austroasiatic) linguistic and cultural substratum. Although Reichle herself does not make that point, one may wonder whether such case of convergence is due to independent invention or rather stems from an early layer that formed the shared matrix of both autochthonous and Indic Tantric elements. Cultural and religious phenomena that would seem to imply a convergence between certain Indic and Austronesian motifs in Java and Bali—namely, the five Śaiva seers (*pañcarṣi* or *pañcakuśika*) and related “mystical siblings” (*kanda mpat*)—have been described by Headley (2004, p. 123) and Acri (2014a). At the core of these similarities there lies an epistemic system of categorization of the internal and external universe through related series of visible and invisible interfaces that stand in meaningful relation to the individual, and provide the links to bridge different levels of reality. Whether this epistemic system developed from a common shared matrix or was “brought into sharper focus” (to say it with Wolters) by Indic influence is a question that awaits further investigation.

Clearly, in the absence of concrete data, any hypothesis concerning the origin of cultural phenomena in a remote past is bound to remain within the realm of speculation. Nevertheless, in recent years there has been an increasing tendency among scholars to map the possible common origins of cultural phenomena across different areas of the world, by resorting to oral history, mythology and folklore, and push back chronological boundaries into late prehistory (see, for example, Bellah 2011 on religion in human evolution). An ambitious and bold attempt to trace a shared

¹⁹ For example, the killing of a slave under the pole of a new house recalls the human sacrifices that were alleged to have taken place at Prambanan upon its consecration (see Jordaán and Wessing 1996; Wessing and Jordaán 1997).

ancestral global mythology back to a remote human past has been carried out by Sanskritist and Vedicist Michael Witzel in his recent monograph *The Origins of the World's Mythologies* (2012). Witzel individuates a "Laurasian mythology" diffused over North Africa, Eurasia and the Americas, and a "Gondwana mythology" found in sub-Saharan Africa, the Andaman Islands, Papua and Australia, as well as in smaller enclaves elsewhere, such as among the Todas in South India and the Semang in Malaysia. Witzel's hypothesis is relevant to our discussion insofar as (1) it individuates an ancestral areal phenomenon spanning the geographical extent of Monsoon Asia, and including Austroasiatic-speaking people of "Negrito" ethnic descent; (2) it employs a comparative and diachronic/phylogenetic methodology to explain the diffusion of mythologemes across the world. Witzel (2012, p. 279) admits that comparative mythology is not a hard science; however, reminding the reader that reconstruction of proto-Indoeuropean and other linguistic families is an established fact in science (p. 278), Witzel argues that the realm of mythology should be considered as a legitimate realm of enquiry to formulate hypotheses on the origin and migration of people, languages and cultures.²⁰

[p. 284] we can make predictions about which particular facts must have existed at certain stages in the past, as has been done successfully in historical comparative linguistics.... I assume the same can eventually be done for mythology, even though script and written texts earlier than c. 3000 BCE will hardly emerge to prove my case. Early human art, however, such as some cave paintings..., may indicate whether I have been right or not.... [R]econstructions of early mythologies that precede the Indo-European, Semitic, and Austronesian ones and so on... by 10,000 or more years can be made probable by detecting their common motifs, their structures, and eventually, their narrational frameworks.

²⁰ Witzel (2012, p. 46) rightly reminds us that "the historical comparative approach is not one of old-fashioned Romanticism looking for and speculating on distant *ur*-situations, but it is the cladistic procedure also used by genetics, human anthropology, archaeology, linguistics, and philological manuscript research: all of them present pedigrees or stemmas of subsequent historical layers and their interrelations, filiations, or branchings".

[285] Of great theoretical interest is the question of the close interlinking, or the side-by-side existence, of ‘genetically’ transmitted mythologies (that is, via a parents-to-children type of pedigree) and of those that have arrived by diffusion. Both can occur side by side within one and the same local mythology.

To illustrate his last point, Witzel embarks on an “imagined investigation”:

[286] *if we were ignorant of ancient European mythology and history, we might think of the various Christian myths and legends as typically European and wonder about their close relationship with those of Israel and the Near East. One might regard the Near East as an outlying area, not the actual center of diffusion. Nevertheless, we would be surprised by the large number of items in European folksongs, customs, and fairy tales that do not fit biblical topics at all, for example, the multifaceted role of the ‘devil’. Much of their individual background would quickly be ‘explained’ as being secondary explanations of natural phenomena and the like, which occur in other etiological tales.... Then, there are tales about the Milky Way as the path of the dead or the lambs, the threatening figure of the ‘Wild Hunter and his troop’ at Christmas, and so forth.... Pursuing this kind of imagined investigation, we would, however, quickly be led to conclude that these are remnants of an older level of European myth.* (emphasis mine)

Witzel’s thought experiment opens up fascinating scenarios for the study of the deep human past, suggesting as it does that scholars must try to resort to theoretical comparative reconstruction whenever “hard evidence” is not available—a process that is routinely applied by historical linguistics. Witzel’s imagined investigation may be translated into a metaphor that is relevant to the study of Indic religions over Monsoon Asia, where instantiations of Tantric cults known to us through the body of mediaeval texts, artefacts, and archaeological remains may be the result of a complex multi-directional historical process of transfer in the cadre of a region, to say it with Emigh, with “thousands of years of a partially shared prehistory”. Indeed, one may argue that what made possible at all the fruitful transfer, adoption and adaption of cultural tropes was a commonality of epistemes rooted in a shared matrix extending across Monsoon Asia.

5. The Religion of the Violent Godhead: Nkuu’, Rudra-Śiva, and Kāla-Bhairava

Having outlined the historiographic parameters of the issues under discussion, I will now test some of the hypotheses advanced by Dentan to support a connection between Semai religious tropes and aspects of Vedic and post-Vedic religion in India. Our starting point is the key figure of Nkuu’, the Semai godhead.²¹ What Indo-European ideologies call “devil” and “wild hunter and his troop” (Witzel 2012, p. 286) correspond to the “Dark Lord” and his malevolent hosts feared by the Semai, the Temiars, and their “Negrito” cousins from the Andaman islands to the Philippines.²² Dentan (2002a, p. 120) describes the salient elements of the postulated shared prehistoric religion as follows:

a high storm God feared but not worshiped; a notion of shamanic power embodied in demon wives; the use of blood to counteract that power; a congeries of particular sacred plants; and huge chthonic serpents or dragons associated with water.

On account of the feature shared by the two gods, Dentan argues that Nkuu’ would be the counterpart of Vedic Rudra (“the Howler”), which later developed into the Śiva of Classical Hinduism. Below I list the features pointed out by Dentan, then integrate them with new insights:

—*Associations with hunt, wilderness, and thunder(bolt)s.* The terrifying Godhead of the Semai is a frightening, violent, blood-thirsty, and tricksterish boogeyman-god (Dentan 2002a, p. 161). Like Nkuu’, and like the “Spectre huntsman” of the Malays (see below), Rudra

²¹ The word Nkuu’ is cognate with Malay *tengku*, “Prince” or “Lord” (also a title of nobility), of uncertain etymology (Dentan 2002a, p. 160). Nkuu’ is recognized as a thunder-god also by the Temiars, another aboriginal group of peninsular Malaysia, among whom he plays a major role as the embodiment of evil, known as Karey (Benjamin 2014, pp. 60, 195–96).

²² To Blust (2013), among the cultural evidence suggesting an ancestral historical relationship between the “Negritos” of the Philippines and those of the Malay Peninsula is precisely the name of the thunder god, as well as the “thunder-complex” (cf. below, fn. 57).

is wild and fierce—“a hunter in the wilderness whose abode is in the mountains in the north, who is clad in animal hide, has braided hair, and is excluded from the vedic sacrificial cult” (Bisschop 2013). Rudra, being initially an outsider, “by the end of the Vedic period... grew in stature, absorbing many aspects of other deities, especially Agni (fire, heat) and Indra (thunderbolt-bearer)” (ibid.).

—*Ability to assume many forms; close ties with animals.* Just like the god of the Semai, Rudra-Śiva is capable of taking all forms (*viśvarūpa*), including that of animals (Dentan 2002a, p. 172; Bisschop 2013). Śiva wears or sits on a tiger skin, and rides a bull; Nkuu’ is sometimes conceived of as a monkey.

—*Being “Lords of Beasts”.* The Lord from whom the Semai stole shamanic power is a “Lord of Beasts” (Dentan 2002a, p. 163).²³ This equals the appellative “Paśupati” of Rudra/Śiva in the post-Vedic early Śaiva tradition (where *paśu*, “beast”, has been “intellectualized” as a reference to the bound souls).

—*Being not worshiped but feared/appeased.* Just like Nkuu’, Rudra is wild and fierce, “a terrible beast, like a wild storm” (Doniger O’Flaherty 1981, p. 219), worshiped “more in fear than in the spirit of devotion” (Doniger O’Flaherty 1975, p. 116), and “more to be pacified than to be adored” (ibid., p. 118); yet, in the Vedas he is invoked as healer and cooler of fevers. Śiva (“the benevolent”) is an apotropaic term for Rudra, worshipped to ward off his wrath. Bisschop (2013) points out that “a sense of fear underlies the depictions of Rudra in the Veda”, who comes across as a dangerous god; only three out of the 1,028 hymns of the *Rgveda* are exclusively dedicated to Rudra (for example, 1.114, 2.33, 7.46), and these

²³ Beyond the Semai, the idea that the godhead is a lord of beasts is also found among the Aetas (Negritos) of Luzon; to Winstedt, this fact suggests that “primitive man in south-east Asia had a god in a Lord of Beasts, the nomad’s food” (Winstedt 1961, p. 4).

play upon Rudra’s dangerous and unpredictable nature. He is typically requested not to strike with his arrows and to spare the cattle, children, and people of the village. However, these same hymns also stress Rudra’s healing powers. The god who strikes with disease and death also has the power to heal. These hymns are obviously meant to pacify a deity who could be malevolent if not treated properly.

Like Nkuu’, Rudra embodies the destructive aspect of a supreme deity who annihilates the universe at the end of a cosmic age.

- Malevolent offspring and demonic entourage.* Nkuu’ is chief of a host of fearsome demons (Dentan 2002a, p. 164), while Rudra is “the master of thousands of Rudras roaming in all directions” (Bisschop 2013). Rudra’s sons are sometimes identified with the Maruts, thundersquall gods who are part of his (or Indra’s) entourage (Dentan 2002a, p. 169), along with various categories of malevolent beings, such as *bhūtas*, *pretas* and *piśācas*. There is an association between Sanskrit *piśāca* “flesh eater” and Semai *ceep caa’ sej* “flesh-eater birds” (or bees), which are associated with Nkuu’; in both contexts, these are malevolent beings regarded as bugs and creeping creatures. Rudra and his hypostases (e.g. Tumburu) are associated with wrathful female deities, and supernatural female beings called *ḍākinīs* or *yoginīs* (see below).
- Relationship with power, theorized as female (and often demonic).* In the Indic sphere, we find the concept of Śiva’s *śakti*, and such figures as the *ḍākinīs/yoginīs*. Dentan (2002a, pp. 163–64) discusses a conceptualization of power as female, and its articulation through an erotic relationship between Semai adepts and demonic wives. Furthermore, there appears to be a parallel between seven power-bestowing female deities among the Semai and the Indic Kṛttikās/Mātṛs (see below).
- Association with a congeries of particular sacred plants.* Besides Nkuu’, this is also the case of Tumburu, an early form of Rudra, and of his hypostasis Kāla/Vanaspati (see below).

If taken singularly, these—admittedly rather generic—ideas and activities could be regarded as the result of independent creation,

while linguistic borrowings may be seen as Sanskritic influxes into Semai language. However, if taken collectively, and especially when reinforced with evidence of linguistic and cultural contact between the Indo-Aryan and the Austroasiatic spheres, they may suggest that more complex circulatory processes were at play.

The similarities outlined above are mostly between Nkuu' and Śiva in the form of Rudra, the terrible outsider god of the Vedic and early post-Vedic textual corpus, i.e. the earliest stage of what we now call "Hinduism". Dentan did not discuss the later historical development of that deity, which gave rise to the hypostases of Tumburu, Bhairava, and Kāla, as attested in the enormous Tantric textual corpus that came to the fore since ca. the fifth century CE in the Indian Subcontinent and the wider Indic world. It is this literature, and other contemporary genres that were influenced by it in both South and Southeast Asia, which yields some interesting leads for further comparison. Below I present some additional evidence drawn from Sanskrit and Old Javanese textual sources, as well as ancient and modern Javano-Balinese folklore, that would appear to substantiate some of Dentan's claims with respect to the existence of a link between Semai lore and (Tantric) Hinduism.

5.1 Of Words

Possible historical links between Nkuu' and Rudra may be found in the traces of Sanskrit vocabulary featuring in Semai mythology. As we have seen above, there exists a thematic relationship between Sanskrit *piśāca* and Semai *ceep caa' sej*, a category of flesh-eating malevolent beings associated to Rudra and Nkuu' respectively. The Sanskrit form might have been borrowed from Austroasiatic, as suggested by the obvious relation between phonetic and morphological elements: the former word may be an inversion and contraction of the latter (*ceep* > *piś*, *caa' sej* > *śaca*); alternatively, both words could have derived from a common proto-form.²⁴ Conversely, terms of likely Sanskrit derivation attested in

²⁴ Notably, the largely unattested Paiśācī language ("the language spoken by flesh-eating ghouls", *piśāca*) is connected in Sanskritic imaginary to an archaic language current among (Austroasiatic-speaking) tribal communities of the Indian Subcontinent.

Semai language are *mrgaas* (< Skt *mṛga*),²⁵ *dangaa'* or *naga'* (< Skt *nāga*),²⁶ and *rahuu'* (< Skt *Rāhu*) (Dentan 2002a, pp. 163, 169). *Rahuu'* (“Dark cloud”), denoting the home of *Nkuu'*, is obviously derived from the Sanskrit *Rāhu*, “the Seizer”—a mythological and astronomical dragon-like demonic character who swallows the sun and moon during eclipses (see Figure 3.1).²⁷ Dentan notes that the existence of these Sanskrit terms among the Semai may be explained as borrowings; yet, the related Indic concepts they carry usually retain a secondary role: “although there are filigrees of Śaivism in Semai theology, its core seems indigenous” (2002a, p. 171).

Rāhu is a prominent figure in the literatures and arts of both peninsular and insular Southeast Asia. In mediaeval Indic lore, *Rāhu* is presided over by the demonic aspect of Śiva known as *Kāla* (“the Black/Dark One”, or “Time”, as devourer of everything) or *Bhairava*. In Java and Bali, as well as in the Malay world, *Kāla* is conceived of as Śiva’s unruly son, who stole the elixir of life from the gods and got burnt in the process, keeping only his head; *Kāla(mukha)* is often depicted as eating the sun (i.e. during eclipses) or devouring himself. An equivalence between *Kāla*, *Rāhu*, and *Kīrtimukha/Kālamukha* (also called *Vanaspati/Banaspati*)²⁸ in Java and Assam, *Boma* in Bali, and *Vajramastaka* in Orissa) may be established with respect to the widespread architectonic element (demon-head) standing as a guardian above doorways of temples and monumental

²⁵ As Semai mythology has it, “to commit the incest, both the Creator and His daughter took the form of deer, *mrga*. Deer seem to be the mothers of sacred cows in India and are associated with motherhood and incest by Semai; but the Semai term *mrgaas* is a euphemism for ‘tiger’, the embodiment of the violent shamanic power which the Lord God stupidly gave to humans” (Dentan 2002a, p. 169). For an alternative etymology (of the possibly related Temiar word *mērgēeh* “demoniac”), see Benjamin 2014, p. 125, fn. 33.

²⁶ That word, and the related concept, is also found among the Temiars (Benjamin 2014, p. 183); see discussion below, p. 114.

²⁷ For a discussion of this word among the Temiars, see Benjamin 2014, p. 57.

²⁸ This means “the king of the wood” in Sanskrit, and may at times indicate the fig tree, or timber. The Javano-Balinese form *Banaspati*, used to refer to the *Kālamukha/Kīrtimukha* element, appears to have a counterpart in India as well: cf. *vanaspatīśiras* (“the head of *Vanaspati*”) invoked in the *Niśvāsaguhya* (2.90b), belonging to the early Śaiva Tantra *Niśvāsattattvasaṃhitā* (cf. the analogous, and tautologic, compound *rāhuśiras*).

FIGURE 3.1



**Rāhu (note the Kīrtimukha at the top),
Konarak, Orissa, Thirteenth Century
(now at British Museum)**

Source: Courtesy of Redtigerxyz at English
Wikipedia (Wikimedia Commons).

edifices in Southeast Asia, India, and Nepal (see Figure 3.2).²⁹ White (2010, p. 206) points out that in the Kathmandu Valley Bhairava is often represented as nothing but a face or head (the Kīrtimukha among them), and fanciful stories are offered to account for this fact. These elements highlight the fascination for the terrible aspect of the godhead (and his various emanations) current in the Indic world, and especially in Southeast Asia.

²⁹ For a discussion of the Kāla/Kīrtimukha motif in the Indic world, see Dhar 2007.

FIGURE 3.2



Kāla Heads (Kīrtimukha), Trowulan Museum, East Java

Source: Author.

While so far we have considered some concepts and Sanskrit loanwords found among the Semai and Indicized societies of Southeast Asia, we may now investigate loanwords of putative Austroasiatic origin occurring in Sanskrit literature from South Asia. These may bear some relevance to the much-debated issue of origin of the figure of Rudra-Śiva and its cults, which, as remarked by Bisschop (2013), seem to have originated in a “complex cultural background in which both vedic and extra-vedic elements have played a role”. Dentan’s hypothesis concerning the common origin of Rudra and Nkuu’ in a pre- or non-Aryan, i.e. Austroasiatic cultural milieu addresses these points, yet needs to be tested from a historical perspective grounded in linguistic and textual data. A possible pointer to a pre-Aryan context is the presence of Austroasiatic words in the early Śaiva vocabulary and cultic stock. By “Austroasiatic” here I mean words borrowed from attested Munda languages, which belong to the Austroasiatic family of languages.³⁰ While Austroasiatic languages are mainly represented in mainland Southeast Asia (i.e. Vietnamese, Khmer and Mon, as well as the Aslian language spoken by the Semai and other ethnic minorities), pockets of speakers of Austroasiatic languages are found in Central and Eastern India and in the Andaman and Nicobar islands.

It has been long since noted that some words for cultigens in (Middle) Indo-Aryan languages have been borrowed from Austroasiatic languages: see Masica (1979) with respect to Hindi, and Southworth (2005, p. 223) with respect to Sanskrit (and a possible Southeast Asian origin for seven crops). The historical/migratory dynamics behind the Austroasiatic influence on (Middle) Indo-Aryan languages are still unclear. Most scholars accept the Austroasiatic language family as forming, along with the Dravidian, a linguistic layer existing prior to the arrival of Indo-Aryan languages into the (central and southern parts

³⁰ Problems still exist in the classification of Austroasiatic languages (see Sidwell 2015, pp. 144–49). For instance, an increasing number of scholars now think that the Munda languages do not form a primary-level subdivision of Austroasiatic separate from Mon-Khmer, and the very term “Mon-Khmer” is currently being replaced by “Austroasiatic” (p.c. Geoffrey Benjamin, June 2015).

of the) Indian Subcontinent,³¹ yet the issue of the origin of the Austroasiatic-speaking Munda populations—whether from South or Southeast Asia—remains controversial.³² According to Gupta (2005, p. 22), “The Austroasiatic infusions into Sanskrit can perhaps be best explained in terms of maritime crossings from Southeast Asia to peninsular India in some undetermined time in antiquity”;³³ indeed, parallels in the Calcolithic and Neolithic material culture of Eastern India and mainland Southeast Asia have been regarded as evidence of overlaps, or even influence from the latter area on the former (Gupta 2005, pp. 22–23; Selvakumar 2011, pp. 201–2; Gaillard, Singh, and Dambricourt Malassé 2012; Blench 2013, p. 12). Elst (2005, pp. 255–56) argues that “at least linguistically, the Munda tribals are not ‘aboriginals’ (with a pseudo-native modern term, *ādivāsi*), but carriers and importers of Southeast-Asian culture”,³⁴ while Blench (2013) individuates an “arc of vegeculture” stretching between Melanesia and Eastern Nepal that, correlating with linguistic evidence and material culture items, may have constituted an early corridor of diffusion of ideas. Peterson (forthcoming) suggests that what has been labelled by Bronkhorst “Greater Magadhan” culture of Northeastern India may have been substantially influenced by a considerable number of autochthonous Munda-speaking linguistic groups who at that time were

³¹ Similarly, (proto-)Austroasiatic may have formed the earliest linguistic phylum in Southeast Asia, and indeed Austroasiatic lexicon is found in some Austronesian languages (especially Chamic and some Malay dialects).

³² It is now recognized by historical/comparative linguistics that the separation of the two main Austroasiatic subfamilies—Munda and Mon-Khmer—must be placed well back in prehistory (see Riccio et al. 2011 and Chaubey et al. 2011 for a discussion in the light of genetic evidence). Blust (1996, p. 132) suggests that by 7,000–7,500 BP, Proto-Austroasiatic had already separated into Munda and Mon-Khmer dialect areas: Munda moved “down the Brahmaputra Valley into Assam and Bangladesh, gradually spreading westward, and Mon-Khmer down the Salween and Mekong valleys into mainland Southeast Asia”.

³³ Mahdi (this volume) argues that the Austroasiatic-speaking Negritos were the first to navigate in a remote past. If this was the case, they might have taken along other tangible and intangible cultural goods to South and East Asia.

³⁴ On the cultural and linguistic evidence supporting the existence of almost certain historical relationship among the Austroasiatic-speaking Negrito groups of Southeast Asia (and perhaps of the Andaman Islands too), see Blust 2013.

only beginning to be assimilated into the culture of the Indo-Aryan-speaking “invaders”, and who did not recognize the Brahmans as the highest class of society. At the same time, he advances the working hypothesis that the Munda languages, which today are restricted to four residual zones in the Subcontinent, were once spoken over a much wider area (at least in the eastern half of the Indo-Gangetic plain). Be this as it may, what is relevant to our discussion is that 1) the Austroasiatic-speaking ethnic groups scattered over the eastern (and insular) areas of the modern Indian Subcontinent may carry, in a modified form, cultural themes that are/were shared by their Southeast Asian Negrito cousins (see Dentan, this volume); and 2) given the relative paucity of Austroasiatic loan-words in (Middle) Indo-Aryan languages (ca. 6 per cent, see Witzel 1999a), even in domains where loanwords abound (e.g. agriculture), the influx of ultimately Austroasiatic terms into the Sanskrit Śaiva cultic sphere is an intriguing fact.

An Austroasiatic loan-word associated to the earliest Indian phase of Śaivism (ca. third to fifth century CE) is *lākula*, which we find in the Sanskrit forms *Lakulīśa* (“the Lord with the Club”) and *Lāguḍi/Lākulin* (“club-bearer”). Conceived of as the human incarnation of Śiva-Rudra in the corpse of a Brahmin, this central figure of Pāśupatism was venerated as a teacher and promulgator on earth of the Śaiva doctrine. Przyluski (1929a, pp. 8–15) derived *lākula* from the Austroasiatic *lāṅgula* (“penis”, “stick”), which is related to *lāṅgala* (“plough”, “digging-stick for ploughing”).³⁵ The origin of the word *laguḍa/lakuṭa* and its use in Sanskrit literature in the sense of “club” is not yet clear (Bakker 2011, pp. 27–28); nonetheless, Przyluski’s equation with the

³⁵ See Shorto 2006, p. 448 (**lŋgal*, **ŋgal*; by dissimilation **lŋguur*; **lŋgu[ə]r* “plough”), and Turner 1966 s.v. *lāṅgūlā* (“tail”, adj. “having a tail”, “penis”); cf. **laṅga3* (“end of loincloth”, cf. *laṅja3* “end of cloth tucked in behind”, possibly same as *laṅja2* “tail”?), and connected with *liṅga*). Southworth (2005, p. 68) regards *lāṅgala* as “[o]ne important word which seems to have a clear A[ustro] A[sianic] source”; Hoogervorst (2013, p. 3, fn. 1) points out that “an Austro-Asiatic origin of OIA **lāṅgala* ‘plough’ is certainly plausible from the perspective of Mon-Khmer linguistics”, and that these forms “presumably stood at the head of a series of loanwords in Malayo-Polynesian languages”.

Austroasiatic *lāṅgula* in the meaning of "stick" or "penis" is convincing, as an analogy between the club and the phallus in early iconography of (itiphallic) Lakulīśa may be established.³⁶ Notably, a cognate (likely Austroasiatic) word is *liṅga*, which plays an important role in Śaiva worship.

Another Sanskrit word of putative Austroasiatic origin that is connected to the early phase of Śaivism in both the Subcontinent and Southeast Asia is *tumburu*. Przyluski (1929b, p. 154ff.) traced it back to *uḍumbara/udumbara*, a type of fig-tree, which may be related to *tumba*, a cucurbit.³⁷ While there has been a lot of discussion as to whether the *udumbara*, and fig- or banyan-trees in general, were assimilated by Vedic Hinduism from an Austroasiatic-speaking Negrito or Austronesian-speaking milieu (see Dahlquist 1977, pp. 230–31, Mahdi 1999, pp. 189–209), the tropes associated with the deity named Tumburu (whatever the origin of the word may be) are remindful of the similarities individuated by Dentan with respect to Rudra and Nkuu'. Tumburu originally ranked among the Gandharvas—the celestial flying-musicians headed by Indra, the thunderbolt-bearing god—, and featured in the *Atharvaveda* as a healing tree or tree-god bearing that

³⁶ See Turner 1966 s.v. *lakuṭa*. Bakker (2011) mentions Przyluski's hypothesis in connection with the genesis of Lakulīśa en passant, while discussing more elaborately Ingall's hypothesis of a Greek origin (from Heracles). To Bakker, "even if we do not accept Przyluski's etymology that links the word to the Austro-Asiatic *lāṅgula*, meaning 'stick' or 'penis', we may assume that phallic symbolism easily suggested itself to the Indian mind and came to be associated with this particular attribute" (p. 28).

³⁷ *Udumbāra* is considered Austroasiatic also by Mayrhofer (1956, vol. I, p. 104; cf. Turner 1966 s.v.), and identified with *Ficus glomerata* or *Ficus racemosa*, native of Australia, Malaysia, Southeast Asia and the Indian Subcontinent; Austroasiatic **ṭumba* (Skt *tumbā*, cf. *gōḍumbikā*, Turner 1966 s.v.) is a cucurbit of *coloquintida* (*Lagenaria vulgaris*) that, like a large number of gourds, are of Eastern Asiatic origin. Tumburu may also betray a contamination with the instrument *ṭamburā vīṇā*—for Tumburu is the king of the Gandharvas—, and perhaps be related to *ḍombā*, "outcaste tribe" (see Przyluski 1929b, pp. 149–55ff.). Southworth (2005, p. 74) considers this etymology "tortuous" and, in spite of the difference between "fig" and "date", suggests a derivation from Dravidian "fig/date tree" (Proto-Dravidian **uttu* "date", **mara* "tree").

name (Griffiths 2004–5).³⁸ In Śaiva and Buddhist Tantric literature he is first represented as a harmful demon to be warded off, then identified with (a manifestation of) Śiva/Bhairava and ultimate revealer of the north/left-facing stream (*vāmastrotas*) of the Śaiva textual corpus. In the *Vīnāśikhatantra*, one of the early Śaivatantras stemming from that stream (Goudriaan 1985, p. 4), he represents the paramount aspect of Śiva indeed; his four *śaktis* or sisters, Jayā, Vijayā, Ajitā, and Aparājitā, play a central role in his cult. Tumburu was known in Cambodia, Bali, and China by the 9th century.³⁹ Bourdonneau (2011, p. 1357) describes Tumburu as a divinity with a royal dimension, but also as a warring god, prolonging the human life, a protective yet ambivalent divinity able to exercise destructive powers. This ambiguity is concretized by the terrible goddesses who form his entourage. These could be either the four above-mentioned sisters or the seven or eight Mother Goddesses (*Mātṛs*). Tumburu spearheads these deities and can also act as a mitigator to their nefarious influences (Goudriaan 1985, p. 23; Sanderson 2001, p. 46; Hatley 2007, p. 142).⁴⁰

Hatley (2007, p. 282) regards the cult of the Sisters of Tumburu as “most historically significant”, and connects it to a later Tantric corpus (the Bhairatavatantras and Yoginītantras) centred around the cult of

³⁸ Griffiths traces Tumburu to the Vedic *tumburu/audumbara*, a copper-coloured fig tree belonging to the *Zanthoxylum* species. In *Paippalādasamhitā* 15.23.3–4, Tumburu protects from thunderbolt (“we keep away the Thunderbolt with a branch of the Udumbara”), whereas in 61.9 it is counterposed to hypostases of Rudra: “Bhava (= Rudra) does not strike, Śarva (= Rudra) does not shoot [his] arrow, there where you, o heavenly Tumburu, grow wide on the mountains” (ibid.). A relation between *tumburu* and *udumbara/udumbalā* seems likely, also in view of the fact that both words are associated with red/copper-colour (see Witzel 1983 on the latter; note that in *Rg Veda* 10.14.12, *udumbalā* is referred to Yama’s demonic dogs).

³⁹ On Tumburu and his four sisters, see Goudriaan 1973 and Goudriaan 1985, pp. 18–30, 47–48; cf. Sanderson 2001, pp. 8, 12–13, 32; Sanderson 2003–4, pp. 355ff., 373ff.; Sanderson 2004, p. 278). On the verses of the *Vīnāśikhatantra* found in a Sanskrit magical *stuti* from Bali, see Goudriaan 1973, pp. 51–56.

⁴⁰ Hatley (2007, p. 146) notes that in the early Tantric Buddhist text *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* “the iconography of the Four Sisters and Tumburu has unusual maritime elements. The Four Sisters are repeatedly described as mounted in a boat... with Tumburu as the helmsman” (cf. *Netratāntra* 11.25cd–26ab).

Rudra-Bhairava and associated with malignant magical practices and exorcism, the Bhūtanātras, and one concerned with the cult of Ḍākinīs and Yoginīs. He (ibid., p. 143) describes these female beings as largely malevolent and parasitic, but also as bestowers of supernatural powers on yogins who invoke or worship them through mantras, or actually copulate with them. Further, he (ibid., p. 32) points out that “it has been widely acknowledged that yoginīs have roots in early traditions of Mother goddesses, *māṭṛs* or *māṭṛkās*, whose qualities they inherit in no small measure”. These Māṭṛs become widespread in the Gupta era, and may be the result of cultural assimilation. There may be a historical connection between the Tantric Māṭṛs or Yoginīs/Ḍākinīs, whose cult was widespread throughout the mediaeval period, and the Vedic Māṭṛs, the wives of the seven sages or seers (*saptarṣi*). Dentan (2002a, p. 166) has argued that there is a parallel between seven power-bestowing female deities among the Semai and the Indic Māṭṛs/Kṛttikās:

Shamanic powers came to humans via the seven Original Adepts (*halaa’ asal*) and Original Midwives; as seven is not a traditional magic number in Semai culture, these are obviously derived from the Vedic seven sages (*saptarṣi*) and their wives, the seven *kṛttikas*, ‘cutters or razors’. As the seven Seers founded Hinduism, so the seven Adepts founded Semai shamanism. Since Semai freely add exogenous explanatory accounts of various phenomena to indigenous ones..., perhaps they just tacked the Seers and Razors onto their own ideology, without bothering with details.

Early Sanskrit sources, such as the *Mahābhārata*, as well as Kuṣāṇa-period sculptural evidence, attest to an association between these Māṭṛs/Kṛttikās and Skanda/Kumāra, Śiva’s son;⁴¹ the accounts “are many and highly layered, no doubt the products of a long development” (Hatley 2007, p. 36). In fact, Parpola (1985, pp. 121, 151) traces the genealogy of the Kṛttikās to the Indus Valley Civilization through the Mohenjo-

⁴¹ See discussion in White 2003, pp. 35–63; cf. *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* 22.24b, mentioning the Skandamāṭṛs (ed. Vaidya 1964).

darō “fig deity seal”. It is interesting in the present context to point out that the names of most of these Kṛttikās (= Pleiades) betray non-Indoeuropean origins—possibly Austroasiatic: *ambā*, *dulā/bulā*, *nitatnī*, *cupuṇīkā*. *Ambā* and *Cupuṇīkā*, as well as the remaining three, show an association with water, rain and cloud (and therefore, the monsoon), e.g. *abharayantī*, *meghayantī*, *varṣayantī*.⁴² According to Newar folklore, the Kṛttikās are the mothers of Kumāra (i.e. Skanda), the rain-child whose birthday rite is celebrated at the beginning of the rainy season. The word *kumāra* (“young man”) itself has been identified as an Austroasiatic/Para-Munda borrowing (Southworth 2005, p. 68), while the identification of Skanda with Murugan, a South Indian deity, may reflect a process of Vedic-Dravidian synthesis that is also represented in the story of Murugan’s two consorts, one of whom is seen as the daughter of a tribal chief (Frazier 2011, p. 303). As suggested by Vajracharya (1997), an emphasis on water, rain, and seasonal atmospheric phenomena may be indicative of an influence of “monsoonal culture” of non-Aryan agriculturalist populations on Vedic nomadic culture.⁴³

⁴² Interestingly, these are also the names of bricks in the *agnicayana* (Witzel 1999b). *Cupuṇīkā*, related to *nicumpuṇa*, “effusion, bubbling, water spirit” (Witzel 1999b), “flood” (Keith, in Kuiper 1991, p. 85), is one of the Pleiades’ stars. In early Kuṣāṇa art from Mathura, the Kṛttikās are depicted holding river/cloud as their main attributes (Vajracharya 1997). The fifth-century stone inscription of Gaṅgdhār (Rajasthan) mentions a “terrifying home of the Mothers, filled with female demons (*dākinī*).... These Mothers impel the great booming of the rain clouds and rouse the ocean with the mighty wind that arises from the *tāntras* (*sic*)” (Sullivan 2006, p. 11). In general, the Goddess (and her various embodiments) is regarded to rule over plants and favour fertility/rains, and worshiped in specific trees, among them the Banyan and the Sal.

⁴³ Vajracharya argues that, while the *Avesta* shows little interest in rain-making, “the *R̥gveda* is full of prayers for rain and contains many different speculations about the phenomena of rain and lightning”. This would reflect the growing importance of the monsoon as the Indo-Aryans moved toward the basin of the Ganges in the Subcontinent. According to Vajracharya, deities such as Indra and Varuṇa, who originally had nothing to do with the phenomena of rain, due to the association of agriculture with the monsoon became regarded as rain makers; for instance, Varuṇa was originally the god of the night sky representing the primeval water and later became the god of the Indian monsoon, while Indra’s slaying of Vṛtra should be interpreted, besides as a creation myth, also as a story of “drought and rain”.

The parallels outlined above, both distributional (i.e. linguistic) and functional, between Semai and Sanskritic lore may be regarded as the result of a (superficial) Indic influence, as hinted at by Dentan in the case of Sanskrit loanwords and related concepts adopted by the Semai. While the existence of some Austroasiatic words associated with the early cult of Rudra-Śiva and his entourage in the Indian Subcontinent do not allow us to make any assumptions of a wide-ranging nature, they may nonetheless lead us to reconsider the matter of directionality, especially in the light of Dentan’s hypothesis concerning the existence of shared religious tropes across Monsoon Asia in pre- or proto-historical times and a subsequent “convergence” in historical times. By pinpointing those Austroasiatic loans I do not intend to “prove” a direct influence of a putative Austroasiatic religion on Indo-Aryan milieux, but rather strengthen the view, already advanced by many scholars, that the early phase of Śaivism was indeed shaped by both Vedic and non-Vedic cultural milieux, in which the carriers of an “Austroasiatic cultural package” could have played a role.

5.2 On the Feminine as Power

Dentan (2002a) has noted an association between shamanic power, the Lord Nkuu’, fierce/bloody rituals, and (demonic) female practitioners among the Semai:

[A] person’s shamanic power is his ‘wife’.... Semai adepts and successful hunters have demonic wives. (p. 163)⁴⁴

Some Semai strive to connect to the fearsome demons of which the Lord is chief. The relationship is erotic and produces an altered state of consciousness that resembles an erotic ecstasy. The Semai use the Arabic word *asyik*, which refers to loss of self in both sexual and divine unions. (p. 164)

[W]hile Semai adepts are not ascetics, they often have to restrict their diets and behaviour in order to placate their demonic wives/familiar. (p. 166)

⁴⁴ The Temiars use *gunig* (from Malay *gundik* “consort, secondary wife”) as one of their words for “spirit-guide”, male or female (Benjamin 2014, p. 35).

Semai conceptions of, and metaphors for, power recall a constellation of themes found in South Asian Tantric cults. In these cults the providers of supernatural powers are often the Yoginīs or Mātṛs, semi-divine (or demonic) female beings who may entertain an erotic partnership with male adepts. White (2003, p. 8) characterizes Yoginīs as

preternatural or supernatural hybrid between the human, animal, bird, and plant worlds... terrible and benign with regards to humans, who traditionally worshiped them with blood offerings and animal sacrifice. Once gratified by said oblations, the Yoginīs would reveal themselves as ravishing young women and gratify their human devotees with supernatural powers.

Yoginīs were worshiped in the erotico-mystical milieu of the Kaula Tantric stream, which focused on the (internalized) cult of “clan deities” (*kuladevatā*). This cult was not limited to elite milieux, but was widespread in society, as can be evinced from its presence in Indic folklore and, more importantly, among Austroasiatic-speaking Munda tribal groups. Among the Santals of eastern India, Yoginīs or female Tantric deities called *boṅgas* “often interact with human beings and are attractive to humans [... and] are often said to become the lovers or ‘spirit wives’ of human beings” (McDaniel 2013, p. 136); just like Yoginīs (and the “spirit wives” of the Semai), “[b]oṅga wives give blessings, wealth and supernatural powers”; however, they “may also be hostile and vengeful” (ibid., p. 137). To Davidson (2002, p. 198), adepts of a sort of “disciplined eroticism” conceived as a means to spiritual liberation, attracted one such non-human women in a secluded place, in order that their sanctified sexual intercourse would yield worldly benefits. Samuel (2008, p. 246) describes Kāpālīka-style power-seeking sorcerers who

were linked to their relationships with the female spirits and/or human female practitioners known as *yoginīs*, *ḍākinīs*, and by other names. These were frightening and dangerous spirits, and they form part of an ‘alternative pantheon’ of dark and scary female deities associated with Bhairava and his various transforms.

In Semai shamanic seances, the joining of opposites resembles the relationship between *śakti*, i.e. energy/supernatural power intended as female, and a male divine or human actor. Furthermore, there is a relationship with (female menstrual) blood and the shamanic power of counteracting the influence of demonic beings and Nkuu' himself: "Semai women slash their shins and throw the 'heating' blood into the rain to repel the Lord God" (Dentan 2002a, p. 167). A ritual of thigh-blood sacrifice, where the practitioner outpours his or her own blood (perhaps in substitution of human sacrifice), is enacted by the Austroasiatic-speaking Munda people of the Chhota Nagpur plateau to propitiate the female divinities or spirits called *saket-bongas* (*saket* < Skr. *śakti*); those spirits are the tutelary deities of the Santal mediums called *ojhās*, who used to offer their blood in fulfillment of a vow (Brighenti 2009, p. 77).⁴⁵ In mediaeval South Asia, the power of Yoginīs "was intimately connected to the flow of blood, both their own sexual and menstrual emissions, and the blood of their animal (and human?) victims" (White 2003, p. 27). Samuel (2006, p. 26) outlines the pan-Indic, trans-local nature of the cult of fierce female spirit-deities, which has its roots in the Gupta period, and reaches the periphery of the Indic world:

The female deities associated with the fierce deity rituals are closely linked to a class of Indian spirits who cause disease and are propitiated to bring healing. Versions of such female deities can be found in the *Mahābhārata* and in early medical texts, and they have remained staples of folk and village ritual into modern times. The set of deities known as the Saptamātṛkā, though mostly presented as consorts to the major Brahmanical deities, make up a Brahmanical version of these disease-spirits... masked figures possessed by these deities have played an important role in the ritual cycles of Hindu communities from the Nepal Valley to Kerala, Bengal, and Bali.

⁴⁵ Brighenti also describes the sacrifice of *bul-mayam* offered to *bongas* of purely Santal origin by the non-Hinduized tribal priests called *kudam naeke*, who offer drops of their blood mixed with rice.

The Semai regard dragons called *dangaa'* or *naga'* (Skt *nāga*) as wives of the Lord Nkuu'. These beings recall the serpentine female beings (*nāgī*, *nāginī*) of Indic lore, who were conceived of as carriers of supernatural power. Male heroes who engaged in erotic or romantic relationships with *nāgīs* became the founders of royal dynasties in various areas of South and Eastern India, Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Java), and China; a cult of serpents embodied in *Nāgas*, intended as benign beings who bestow wealth and power has been interpreted as non- or pre-Indo-Aryan in origin, as it is prevalent in the same areas.⁴⁶ Przyluski (1924) discussed examples of (sexual) union between a human being and an aquatic creature—usually a fish—recorded in Indian and Chinese mythology and folklore, concluding that the area from where this theme originated was the “maritime civilization” of Southeast Asia, and in particular the Austroasiatic- (and, I would add, Austronesian-) speaking populations living along the shores of rivers or on the sea. The fish eventually became a *Nāga* in India and a “dragon” in China. To him, as was already noted by Finot (1911, p. 32), the connection between the transmission of sovereignty and women would fit societies in which a matrilinear system of succession was implemented, such as among several ethnic groups of Southeast Asia. More recently, Mahdi (1999) has proposed a Southeast Asian pedigree for the pre-Aryan populations called *Nāgas* in Sanskrit sources on account of their maritime orientation, associations with piracy, and a cult of serpents and sacred fig trees.

Although the impressionistic and perforce general discussion offered in the above paragraphs is only preliminary, it nonetheless suggests

⁴⁶ See Spagnoli 2002 for a survey of the topic and the secondary literature. The cult of *Nāgas* has been fully integrated within Hinduism and Buddhism, where they represented tribal deities “tamed” by Buddhist (e.g. Vajrapāṇi) or Hindu deities, which in turn would indicate a paradigm expressing the victory over tribal religion (Verardi 2011). In Tantric Buddhism we find a connection between *Nāgas* and important masters (*Nāgārjuna*, *Nāgabuddhi*) and localities (e.g. *Nāgārjunakoṇḍa*); according to post-eighth century Buddhist hagiography, the scriptural canon of Tantric Buddhism was received by *Vajrasattva* from the *Nāgas*, and then revealed to *Nāgārjuna* in an iron tower in Central India.

that some functional and distributional similarities existed between the various forms and transformations of female deities—from the Mātṛs to the Yoginīs, Nāgīs, and *bongas*—and their relationship to practitioners, blood, and sacrifice across both Indic and “tribal” religions attested across South and Southeast Asia. If anything, this state of affairs speaks in favour of the existence of closer interactions between the cultures of Indo-Aryan-, Austroasiatic-, and Austronesian-language speaking populations in South and Southeast Asia than is generally assumed, and cries out for further research.

5.3 On Monstruosity, Mockery, and Association with Animals

The Semai conceive Nkuu’ as a “brutal deity, emotionally incontinent and often himself subject to being tricked and mocked”, a “ludicrous monster” indeed, an “evil ferocious destroyer God... so grotesquely stupid, so much a prey to his own passions, as to be a figure of fun; He knows that, and is ashamed” (Dentan 2002a, pp. 161–62). Nkuu’ is violent and yet stupid: “His desire to hurt makes Him stupid; His stupidity makes him desire to hurt; in stories about him, wanting to hurt, He hurts Himself” (Dentan 2008, p. 70). The reference to the “hurting oneself” due to one’s own stupidity and incontinence finds a striking parallel in the stories about the origin of the architectural element of Kāla(mukha), which in Java and Bali was identified with Bhaṭāra Kāla—intended as either the demonic child of Śiva, or as a demonic hypostase of the same. According to a popular legend, Kāla, out of a permanently insatiable hunger—and at Śiva’s studious request, in order to save other living beings—devoured his own body, thereby leaving only his head.

The practice of mocking the ludicrous qualities of the Godhead among the Semai for apotropaic aims is a feature that merits a close comparison with Indic (Tantric) religions in both South and Southeast Asia. For instance, the wild and inopportune behaviour of Kāla is mocked during theatrical performances in Bali. The *Kāla Purāṇa* relates how the ever-hungry Kāla wanted to devour his brother Kumāra on account of the fact that he had been given by Śiva the right to eat all persons born on the day of his younger brother’s birth (Stephen 2002, pp. 67–71).

The story is still put on stage in Bali, in slightly different versions, in (comic) performances held during rites of passage. Rather than being just a source of entertainment, such parodic performances are regularly enacted for apotropaic aims—in fact, just to make the gods ashamed of their deviant or destructive behaviours, and reorient their demonic nature towards their divine (benign) original form. As Stephen (2002, pp. 77–79) argues:

The significance of *wayan* performances and other entertainments as the means of causing Durgā and Kāla Rudra to return to their positive forms of Śiwa and Umā... seems to me an idea worthy of considerably more attention than has previously been given it.... Kāla Rudra and Durgā were publicly shamed and their actions parodied in song, dance and *wayan* theatre.... Why? Because parody and humour are used to point to the evil doings of the god and goddess. There is no power that can control Śiwa and Umā in their terrible forms, only they can choose to transform themselves, but ridicule and laughter can cause shame and thus bring the pair to self-awareness.

Wayang performances of the legend of the birth of Kāla are also conducted in Java by *dalangs* for “exorcistic” and purificatory purposes (Headley 2004, pp. 321, 330).

The grotesque aspect of the Divine, embodied in a demonic trickster, is evident in an enigmatic passage of the Old/Middle Javanese text *Navaruci* (Prijoetomo 1934, p. 110). Having described the invisible and formless aspect of the Lord (*bhaṭāra* = Śiwa), Devaruci reveals to the hero Bhīma the characteristics of one of His embodiments:

[... The Lord] becomes a human being; He becomes a male, He becomes a female; He becomes a four-legged animal, moving on all fours, His belly facing down.... He is skilled in singing and reciting. He knows to perform yoga and absorption. He is endowed with Gnosis and Power, there is nobody who equals Him. As for what constitutes His food, He pays little attention to what He eats: He eats his own body, He drinks his own blood.... He is not beautiful; He really likes to laugh. His manner of haughty speaking is not pleasant. [Being only] supernaturally mighty, He is in trouble with the discernment of the sacred scriptures.

The character described in the passage is indeed Bhīma himself, who shares many features with Kāla-Bhairava, the demonic aspect of the Lord Śiva. Bhīma combines features of Bhairava (both meaning: “the frightful one”) with those of the Pāṇḍava hero Bhīma—a mighty, and often wrathful and impulsive, warrior of gigantic proportions, whose strong point is almost uniquely his physical strength; in both the Sanskrit and Javanese versions of the *Mahābhārata* he is known as *vṛkodara*, “wolf-bellied”, because of his wild character and insatiable appetite.⁴⁷ The other features of this divine figure mentioned there, such as the ability to dance and recite, his violent laughter, his possession of Power (*śakti*), are all consonant with those attributed to Bhīma/Bhairava. The references to Bhīma as paying no attention to his diet, and especially as eating his own body and drinking his own blood, call to mind the myth of Kāla discussed above, and, on a human level, the dietary habits of Śaiva practitioners and the notorious practice of cannibalism and blood-drinking attributed to the Kāpālikas, the antinomian devotees of Kāla-Bhairava. A focus on performance and mockery can be also found among the Kāpālikas and their female attendants, the Kapālinīs or Yoginīs. These practitioners aimed at achieving a direct connection with their elected deity, the male Bhairava and/or various terrifying hypostases of the Goddess, through their observance of mimicking or taking upon themselves some of their elected deity’s features in order to reach a complete identification with it, i.e. be “penetrated” or possessed (*āveśa*) in a trance-like state, often triggered by frantic dances and transgressive behaviours. As pointed out by Dentan (2002a, p. 164), the Semai know the analogous concept of “loss of self” in both sexual and divine unions, which they call *asyik* (an Arabic loanword acquired via Malay).

⁴⁷ The “comparisons of Bhīma to wild animals (including lions, tigers and elephants), which are frequently made in the epic, show that he is considered wild, barbaric, demonic and almost animal-like. In Pampa’s tenth-century Kannada work *Bhārata*, Bhīma not only slays Duṣṣāsana but also drinks his blood and eats his flesh” (Bühnemann 2015, p. 470).

FIGURE 3.3



Relief Identified by Aciri and Jordaan (2012) as Portraying the Directional Deity Kāla and His Entourage at Candi Siva, Loro Jonggrang Complex (Prambanan, Central Java), Ninth Century

Source: Courtesy of Mark Long.

The similarities between Nkuu' and Kāla-Bhairava extend further. For instance, the Semai classify Nkuu' as a giant red, black, or black and white ape. His younger brother is Pnoos, "Wind" (Dentan 2008, p. 70). Intriguingly enough, we find an association between Kāla-Bhairava, a monkey, and wind in the Indic imaginary. Kāla-Bhairava (alias Bhīma) is the brother of Hanumān, the mighty (and tricksterish) monkey-deity; Hanumān himself is regarded, and worshiped, as a manifestation of Bhairava in both South Asia and the Javano-Balinese world. In the Balinese *Kapiparwa* it is Hanumān who eats the Sun instead of his brother Kāla, as another popular Indic version of the story has it (see Vickers 2011, p. 127). East Javanese iconography of Hanumān (e.g. the reliefs of Candi Jago) is consonant with the iconography of Bhīma/Bhairava, as both characters share demonic and gigantic traits, a tricksterish nature, supernatural power, a connection with clouds and thunder, and a chequered, black-and-white loincloth (see Kieven 2011, pp. 222–23; Vickers 2011, p. 127). According to a widespread tradition, both Kāla-Bhairava/Bhīma and his brother Hanumān are the children of the (Vedic) god Vāyu/Bāyu and therefore share the appellative *bāyuputra* ("son of Wind"); furthermore, they are characterized by common iconographic features.⁴⁸ In the ninth-century temple-complex of Loro Jonggrang at Prambanan, a relief of Caṇḍi Śiva (Figure 3.3) displays a directional deity that Aciri and Jordaan (2012, pp. 301–2) have identified as Kāla on the basis of the Sanskrit-Old Javanese text *Bhuvanasaṅkṣepa*, which apparently inform the iconographical masterplan of the monument. A human-sized, fanged monkey is part of his entourage; the cloud right above the monkey's head is evidently a symbolic pictorial representation of the wind, i.e. the atmospheric god Vāyu—the storm-god often equated to Rudra and Bhairava (both partaking of the root *ru*,

⁴⁸ When discussing the Balinese *Kapiparwa*, Vickers (2011, p. 127) notes that "[t]he link to Bayu explains a connection... which is otherwise mysterious.... They both have the 'prawn claw' (*supit urang*) coiffure of the semi-divine heroes of the epics, and both wear very little clothing except for the chequered (*poleng*) loincloth. In Balinese ritual use these *poleng* cloths, as the union of opposites, represent power (*sakti*)". Bayu is "iconographically identical to Bima, except that he has the aureole and what Forge refers to as a 'god spot'".

“to roar, howl”). It would thus appear as if the Indic and Javano-Balinese worlds developed a variant configuration—in terms of different family relationships—of the association between a terrible manifestation of the Lord, a monkey, and wind, which we find among the Semai.

As I have remarked throughout this chapter, Kāla/Bhairava, the demonic embodiment of Śiva, holds a prominent position in the Southeast Asian mediaeval Tantric pantheon of both Śaiva and Buddhist persuasion. Even in the Islamic period the Malays paid homage to Śiva in his sinister aspect of Kāla, the destroyer of life (Danaraj 1964, p. 9, Dentan 2008, p. 67). Śiva as Kāla is called upon in Kelantan’s invocation at a state séance, and cycle of five days and five parts of the day are assigned to him (who is placed in the second position after Mahādeva, and before Śrī, Brahmā, and Viṣṇu). Winstedt (1961, p. 34) posited an affinity between the Rudra-Śiva worshiped by the Bhils, Kols and Gonds tribals of India and the “Demon Raja” or “Spectre Huntsman”, whose cult was popular among rural Malays; according to Dentan (2008, p. 66), these deities “may also descend from ‘the Lord’, as Semai call their thundersquall God”.

The fascination with a Dark Lord attested among all social strata of Austroasiatic- and Austronesian-speaking communities of the Indonesian and Malay world can hardly be explainable uniquely in terms of a (mediaeval) import of the prevailing South Asian/Sanskritic religious fashions. Conversely, to posit an Austroasiatic origin for the Rudra/Bhairava/Kāla complex, which has its roots in both Vedic and extra-Vedic milieux, would be equally misleading. To account for the widespread geographical diffusion and chronological resilience of this complex, one may perhaps regard it as a “convergent development” stemming from deep-rooted cultural tropes sharing a common ancestry across Monsoon Asia.

6. “Disreputable Magicians”: On Shamans and Yogins

There seems to be a connection between what Dentan calls “terrorist gods” and fringe socio-religious phenomena that scholars have tended to define as “shamanistic” in Semai, Vedic, and Tantric lore. For instance, the sinister Vedic thunder god Rudra was worshipped by

the *Vrātyas*, a class of “shamans” who “seem to have been outside the normal Aryan scheme of things” and may represent “survivors of some non-Aryan ascetic fraternity that was later loosely associated with the Brahmanic religion” (Basham and Zysk 1989, p. 16; cf. p. 58). The enigmatic *vrātyas* were “organized bands of young, celibate warrior ascetics living on the edges of vedic society.... It is not altogether unlikely that their livelihood advanced and influenced the development of the god’s cultic worship” (Bisschop 2013). Later counterparts of the *Vrātyas* were the *Pāśupatas* who, although belonging to the Brahmanical class, sought to achieve unity with Rudra by identifying with him through the antisocial (and impure) behaviours of “outsiders”; Ingalls (1962) argued that some of their observances, including babbling, making animal noises, and inopportune jokes, are remindful of those carried out by shamans.⁴⁹

As noted by Weber (1967, p. 295), outside of the Brahmanical order there was a “scorned substratum of disreputable magicians preoccupied with the problem of folk religiosity”—and, I would add, with the quest of supernatural powers (*siddhi*). Indeed, in many Asian contexts throughout the mediaeval period we find a wide array of marginal, non-Brahmanical practitioners who played the roles of paripatetic ascetics, performers, healers, astrologers, magicians, mediums, and exorcists. The South Asian regional instantiations of those practitioners-cum-ritual agents are known under a variety of names—e.g. *Ojhas* in Uttar Pradesh, *Baigas* in Madhya Pradesh, *Bhopas* in Rajasthan, etc.—, but have also been included in the broad category of “*Siddha*” (White 1996; Davidson 2002; Samuel 2006). A discussion of these figures may be relevant to the—still very much open—question of the transfer of religious and cultural ideas outside the Indian Subcontinent, across Monsoon Asia indeed, by agents other than the elite carriers of

⁴⁹ Subsequent Indological scholarship has abandoned this view, pointing out that the acts of *Pāśupata* adepts were not, as in the case of the shaman, manifestations of supernatural powers meant to cut them off from society, but rather aimed at provoking the contempt of others and thus gain good karma on the basis of a complex mechanism of transfer of merit (Lorenzen 1991, p. 188).

high culture, such as Hindu/Brahmanical or Buddhist religious/ritual specialists.

Dentan (2002a, p. 166) describes a class of Semai practitioners who observed dietary restrictions to placate their demonic wives (from whom they obtain supernatural power). Furthermore, there is a relationship between those practitioners and the tricksterish figure of Nkuu' (and the vicious supernatural beings associated with him), whose "power, which demons manifest, is the power to hurt, sicken and terrorize" (ibid., p. 164). This peculiar relationship reminds us of the relationship between what White (2009, p. 105) calls a "sinister yogin" and his elected deity, Bhairava:

The yogin is, in popular South Asian traditions, *none other than the bogey-man or the stock figure of the villain, the terrifying outsider who penetrates sleeping villages under the cover of night to carry off naughty children or unprotected village women*. This, I would argue is the most perennial and pervasive understanding of the person/a of the yogin in South Asia: not a meditating sage absorbed in quietistic introspection, but rather, a *powerful, terrifying Bhairava-like figure who penetrates the cosms of other people bodies, villages, citadels, and armies to conquer his own death by taking the lives of others*. (emphasis mine)

The yogin, like the shaman, literally enters and possesses others' bodies (*paraśarīrapraveśa*)—including those of animals. The class of yogins of the Kaula and Kāpālika type carried out transgressive practices in order to be "entered" (*āveśa*) by Bhairava, their elected deity. Samuel (2006, p. 26) argues:

The key image in these practices is a male figure of magical power and control, a tantric sorcerer surrounded by a circle of fierce female deities. The magician, who takes on the role of a fierce deity associated with the god Śiva, masters and controls these female spirits. Through this mastery, he gains power over the elements and the cosmos, and is able to wield destructive magic.

Various scholars have suggested that the invocation of fierce female deities in magical rituals seems to stem from tribal milieux in mediaeval Indic society. According to Davidson (2002, p. 181), key Tantric temples

devoted to the cults and rituals associated with Yoginīs were “located in areas dominated by tribal peoples that were involved in sanguinary rituals”, which suggests that these sites “were constructed with a similar ritual in mind”, and were tribal before they became Hinduized (Urban 2011, p. 245).

Davidson (2002, p. 227) speaks of a convergence existing between the shaman and the Tantric Buddhist master, or the Śaiva/Buddhist wandering Siddha. This idea is not new: already in 1905, Oldenberg implied an analogous convergence between Vedic and tribal ritualists by declaring that we would have rightly understood *dīkṣā*, the dedicatory rite for him who wishes to celebrate the great Soma sacrifice,

if we compare the performer, hungry and sleepless, uttering stammering words, covered with an antelope’s skin and sitting near the magical fire which scares away demons, with the savage magic-priest, a well-known ethnological figure who seeks to secure mastery over evil spirits by mortification of the flesh.

Oldenberg (1973, p. 52)

Winstedt, linking Malay shamans to Hindu Tantrism, also implied some sort of convergence: “Hinduism in tantric form fortified the Malay shaman by corroborating the efficacy of fasting and seclusion and confirming the notion that trances bring supernatural power” (1961, p. 28). To him, the propitiatory ceremony to purify the Malay state (*pūjā negeri*) by seance, dancing, and sacrifice, conducted by a male or female shaman, would be a relic of Śaktism (ibid., p. 153–54); the Malay and Javanese enthronement ceremonies, the use of regalia, and the attribution of certain posthumous titles, all “would appear to belong to a very early layer of civilization” (ibid., p. 157). Hooykaas (1964) defined the Balinese low-status priest called *Rṣi Bhujāṅga/Seṅguhu*⁵⁰ as “a Shaman but not a Sufi, a Śaiva, and a Vaiṣṇava”.

⁵⁰ This is a Śaiva, non-Brahmanical ritual specialist serving the rural population, who probably derived from the Javanese class of practitioners called *Rṣis*, who in their turn might have been descendants of Pāśupata ascetics (Sanderson 2003–4, p. 376).

Certain types of religious practitioners of premodern Java have been regarded by scholars as shamanic in nature. These peripatetic figures involved in public performances (dance, pantomime, *wayang*, masked dance, trance) appear to be connected to a complex of elements associated with forms of shamanism or mediumship, namely thunder, ominous birds, sorcery, supernatural powers, antinomian behaviours, and exorcism. Among such figures were the *vidus*, whom I have suggested to identify as Śaiva practitioners specialized in performance (Acri 2011, p. 63, 2014b). In Sargas 24 and 25 of the Old Javanese *Rāmāyaṇa kakavin* (ca. ninth century CE) they are satirically linked to a bird, *kuvon* or *manuk vidu* (“*vidu* bird”), namely the migratory black coucal. In a passage of the Old Javanese *Bhomāntaka* (70.1), the coucal’s loud voice is connected with thunderclaps. The stanza, using the imagery of a ceremony, allegorically depicts the sounds produced by thunder, birds, and bull-frogs, evoking the accompaniment of musical instruments during a frenzy dance.⁵¹

The word *vidu* denotes an “actor (dancer, singer, reciter, leader in a performance?)” (Zoetmulder 1982) as well as a religious practitioner and medium. Echoes of this figure and the practices connected with him can be found throughout Southeast Asia, from the Malay peninsula to the Philippines. Aichele (1969, p. 134) pointed out that the words *bidu* and *biduan* in Classical Malay and *buduo’n* in Cham denote a class of comic (shamanic) dancers and musicians; furthermore, he drew attention to the modern Buginese form *widu-widu*, meaning “to joke, to play about”, and the Tagalog *biro*, meaning “quirk,

⁵¹ In the Indic imaginary, frogs—like the cuckoos and coucals in Old Javanese literature—call upon rain (cf. *Rg Veda* 7.103: “the frogs have raised their voice that the god of the rainstorm has inspired”); furthermore, croaking is compared to the religious chanting of priests (cf. *Rāmāyaṇa kakavin* 24.117, where frogs are disciples of the coot, who is the alter ego of a Pāśupata master). The association of the *kuvon*/*manuk vidu* with a call resembling the rumbling of a thunder is found in other Old Javanese passages, namely in the prose *Tantri Kamaṇḍaka* B and its cognate Kiduṇ versions *Tantri Kēḍiri* and *Tantri Dēmuṇ*. The former text narrates the story “cuckoo and waterbirds”, where the *kuvon* features under the *nomen omen* of Vākbajra “thunder-voice(d)” (p. 5). The *kuvon* has a *bajragīta* “song of thunder” and is able to chant in a beautiful way to accompany dance.

joke, jest” (the reduplicate form *pagbibiro* is attested in a passage of a text dealing with the practices of a magician).⁵² Robson (1983, p. 293), in agreement with his predecessor, related the term *vidu* to the Malay *bidu* and *biduan*, “a singer at a shamanistic séance” (according to Wilkinson’s Malay-English dictionary), and argued that the root was indigenous Javanese and not Sanskrit. He connected this figure to a practitioner wandering the countryside to perform a kind of drama linked to exorcism, ritual, and the deeds of ancestors (ibid., p. 294).

A striking description of the *vidu* is found in stanza 112 of Sarga 24 of the *Rāmāyaṇa kakavin*: a black coucal is homologized to a *vidu*, who is in turn characterized—through the lenses of Indic social categories—as a low-ranking wandering performer, accused of deceit and criminal intents, and declared to be *guṇya* (“having manifold supernatural abilities”, “powerful”, “endowed with good qualities”, or: “a sorcerer”) and *saguna* (“possessing magical/supernatural powers”, or “fitting in all roles”, i.e. play-acting) (Acri 2011, p. 62; cf. below). The word *guṇya* is found in Indic tribal milieux, where it is connected with sorcery. In contemporary Orissa, Tantric practitioners are referred to as *guṇiā*: Keul (2013, p. 6) characterizes them as “local tantriks” connected to Yoginī-cults, cremation-ground offerings and healing practices; among the Baigas of Central India and the Santals of (South-) Eastern India, *gunia* means “sorcerer” (Koppers 1940–41, p. 770).⁵³ Rahmann (1959, p. 687) describes a type of Munda village-priest, the *marang* (great) *deora*, primarily a “witch-finder” who derives his powers (*gun*) from Mahadeo (Śiva); *gun* is connected to the name of the Baiga sorcerer, *gunia* (Koppers 1940–41, p. 770). The word *sa-guṇa* in *Rāmāyaṇa kakavin* 24.112, as per Aichele’s (1969, p. 154) translation,

⁵² On the association of bards with shamanism in the Philippines, see Revel, Gage and Railing 1998.

⁵³ According to one recent study (Kumar et al. 2009), the Baigas share two synonymous polymorphisms with a haplogroup specific to Australian Aborigines, and their later ancestors are believed to have spoken an Austroasiatic language (Elwin 1939, pp. 53–55). The Santals speak an Austroasiatic language, Santali.

is a reference to the ability of the black coucal alias *vidu* to “fit in all roles” (namely, play-acting)—more literally, “endowed with [the ability to assume] any quality”. As we have seen in the case of *guṇya*, *guṇa* is commonly used as a synonym of “supernatural powers” (*siddhi*) in both Sanskrit and Old Javanese sources; in the latter, it also means “magic?” (Zoetmulder 1982, p. 553), while in modern Indonesian *guna-guna* means “(black) magic”, “charm”, “magical formula”. Among the goals of Pāśupata ascetics there was the obtainment of the eight supernatural powers/wondrous qualities (*guṇa*) of Rudra-Śiva, one of which was *kāmarūpitva*, “the ability to assume any form at will”. In the South Indian farce *Mattavilāsa* (6, p. 2), a drunk Kāpālīka praises his Kapālīnī for having obtained a beautiful appearance through the supernatural ability to assume any form at will (*kāmarūpatā*). Koppers (1940–41, p. 766) reports that the Santals know of one Kamru (also: Kambru, Kamruk, or Kam), who was the first magician and teacher of witchcraft (Ojhaism); according to Bodding, “It seems natural to connect the word with Skr. *kāma*, and *kāmarūpa*, whether in its original meaning of ‘taking any shape at will, beautiful pleasing’, or as the name of a country, the western portion of Assam. This makes it possible to take it either as the name of a person so called, or as the name of a person from Kamrup” (quoted in *ibid.*). A class of Indian mendicant actors are called Bahrūpia, from Sanskrit *bahu* (“many”) + *rūpa* (“form”; *bāhurūpya* = “manifoldness”), as referring to the ability to act; at the same time, Bahrūpa is a name for the black, fanged Southern face of Śiva/Bhairava (Aghora). The Bahrūpia were known for impersonating gods, especially in their terrible forms (cf. the image of a female impersonator of the goddess Kālī in Napier 1986, p. 165), and to imitate the notes of animals (Russell 1916, p. 344).

Other elements in the description of the *vidu*/black coucal in the *Rāmāyaṇa kakavin* seem to point to a Tantric milieu. For instance, in 24.114 the *kuvoṇ* invites a she-*kuvoṇ* to become a female ascetic (*kili*) and bring satisfaction to naked wandering ascetics (*kalavan lagnāmutusana*), thereby becoming an object of enjoyment (*bhukti*) for the devotees (*bhakta*) in the forest, who have lower-ranking wives

(*kula-kula*).⁵⁴ There is the possibility that (*ma-*)*kula-kula* may be a pun, meaning “having *kulas*” (= “gathering in clans”), implying a reference to the Sanskrit word *kula* in the sense of secret clans or families of initiated devotees, Yoginīs, and minor goddesses around which revolved the theology and ritual practice of the Tantric texts of the Kaula stream—themselves probably derived from an earlier Kāpālīka milieu. Samuel (2006, p. 26), when discussing Kāpālīka-related practices, refers to

the widespread role of low-caste ritual specialists in relation to kingship and political power, a pattern that has been identified in early Tamil literature and occurs in different forms in many parts of South Asia and the Himalayas. If fierce deity practices were originally performed by such low-caste specialists, then the *kula*, ‘families,’ of early tantric practice may derive from the families who carried them out.

Intriguingly enough, the same relationship between low-status ritual specialists and political power applies to the Javanese characters of the *vidu* and *pirus* (see Acri 2014b).

The association between the *vidu* and *pirus* performing characters and birds in various Old Javanese sources is significant. The black coucal (alias *vidu*) is an ominous bird in Javanese lore; coucals, as well as (black) crows and yellow wild pigeons (alias *pirus*) are taboo in both Semai and Old Javano-Balinese lore. In the Old Javanese manual for Śaiva priests *Ṛṣiśāsana*, these birds are mentioned as *krūrapakṣi* (“fierce/wild/bloody/terrifying birds”), whose meat is forbidden food for practitioners of the mainstream Śaiva Siddhānta. Indeed in the Sanskritic imaginaire, black birds, such as crows, and scavengers in general, were associated with Tantric practitioners (Zeiler 2013). Among the Semai, coucals as well as several yellow and black birds (such as crows), are *trlaac*-birds, i.e. connected with any action that might bring on violent disruption; other birds are “wives of thunder” (Dentan 2006, p. 298), or the evil offspring of the Dark Lord, the *ceep caas ʼseic* “flesh-eater birds”.

⁵⁴ Zoetmulder 1982, p. 914 s.v. *kula* II, *kula-kula*: “prob.: wife of lower rank, second wife to the queen (= *matur*, q.v.?)”.

Some premodern Javanese performing characters evoke tantalizing resonances with the figures of Kāpālīka, Kaula, and Siddha practitioners described in South Asian Sanskrit texts on the one hand, and with the mediums and performers found among modern Indian tribals of the Munda-belt on the other. Are the Javanese characters to be regarded as the localized heirs to a category of mediaeval Indic practitioners who travelled from the Indian Subcontinent to Southeast Asia? Or, do they represent “shamanic” figures with an Indic (Tantric) overlay, who survived to the modern period among some small-scale societies across Monsoon Asia, and ultimately share common traits derived from the same ancestry? More comparative research is required in order to throw light on this fascinating issue.

7. Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed some of the distributional and functional similarities individuated by Dentan between certain features (both primary and secondary) of Semai religion and Hinduism, and argued that they extend beyond the Vedic period, being found in the religious systems prevalent in mediaeval South and Southeast Asia: Tantric Śaivism and Tantric Buddhism. The analyses of these similarities, and the hypotheses concerning their origin, give rise to a series of four possible positions and outcomes, either (or combinations) of which must be true:

- 1) The similarities are only alleged, i.e. they are the result of a fallacious methodology, wrong perception, or biased judgement by the investigator(s). In reality, no relationship exist between the religious tropes of (Tantric) Hinduism and Semai lore, and/or Sanskrit and Semai language.
- 2) The similarities exist, but they are not attributable to common origins and historical diffusion; on the contrary, they are merely coincidental, due to [a] pure chance; [b] analogous sociocultural responses/reactions to similar environmental stimuli (i.e. independent invention); or [c] a psychological or neuro-cognitive framework that is common to all mankind (i.e., human universals). This scenario implies what may be described as a

form of "weak convergence theory" (according to Wittgenstein's concept of family resemblances, see Landmann, this volume), presupposing independent invention and development that is due to neither direct transfer nor indirect borrowing or influence (e.g. through a common genitor).

- 3) The similarities exist, and are due to a process of diffusion from an original source (or "giver") to a "receiver". Thus, it may be the case that [a] South Asian carriers of Sanskrit culture were the sources of Indic traits, and Austroasiatic- and Austronesian-speaking members of Indicized/Sanskritized Southeast Asian societies were the receivers; or [b] Southeast Asian agents were the sources of the "adstratal" cultural and linguistic traits borrowed by South Asian individuals. The first model would fit a "strong orthogenetic approach" in the study of Indian/Indic religions, which maintains that the origin of Hinduism and Tantrism are to be sought (exclusively) in a Vedic/Brahmanical milieu within the Indian Subcontinent; in such context, "tribals" of outlying areas were influenced by Sanskrit, Brahmanical, and/or Tantric traditions since the beginning of the early mediaeval period. The second model would fit an heterogenetic approach championing the opposite scenario, whereby the origin of "Classical Hinduism" and Tantrism is to be sought in an extra-Vedic context, which could have originated in South(east) Asian tribals contexts—possibly at an early historical period. Of course, the simultaneous occurrence of both processes is possible: as noted by Dentan (2002a, p. 171) with respect to the religion of the Semai, some Sanskrit words and Indic features were borrowed and "localized", yet they retained a secondary role in their religious system, implying that a different wave of Sanskritization might have taken place.⁵⁵ In either cases, the

⁵⁵ Cf. Benjamin (2014, p. 274) who, while admitting that component elements derived from Brahmanical religions formed part of the practices of non-metropolitan communities in the Malay peninsula, asserts that "Brahminism as a functioning religious system did not spread far beyond the boundaries of Indianised settlements... neither the Malays nor the Semang could be said to have been Brahminists in any overall sense".

similar traits would derive from early historical contacts between South and Southeast Asian people, and would have undergone an analogous process of localization on both sides of the Bay of Bengal.

- 4) The similarities exist, and represent parallel developments out of a common source—a cultural matrix extending across South Asia, Southeast Asia, and perhaps even into Southern China. I should like to stress that this cultural matrix is not an *echt*, essence or substratum, but rather a dynamic process—the result of centuries of circulation of people, languages and ideas—involving exchange, negotiation, and adaptation. It needs not have been homogeneous in its main traits; rather, it may have partaken of a plural set of “cultural packages” carried by multiple ethnic and linguistic groups (i.e. Austroasiatic- and Austronesian-speaking people). This paradigm represents a sort of “strong convergence theory”, which envisages the diffusion, filiation and localization of cultural and linguistic elements that developed across Monsoon Asia in parallel, as it were, and with cross-contaminations, out of a shared matrix. This shared matrix, which is earlier than the first attestations of written documents, may be only inferred by comparing, by means of a polythetic approach and family resemblances, the traits existing among modern purported “survivors” (such as the Semai, or Munda tribals), premodern textual corpora, and other historical datas from geographically distant (yet culturally related) contexts across Monsoon Asia.

I leave it to my readers to judge the likelihood of position 1. Position 2 and each of its subsets cannot be entirely dismissed; yet, the linguistic (diffusional) evidence and the documented historical links existing among many cultures across Monsoon Asia makes it improbable that all or most similarities are due to unrelated, independent developments.⁵⁶ For instance, we are not comparing randomly picked heterogeneous features in a de-contextualized fashion (think, for example, about the occurrence

⁵⁶ Blench (2013, p. 8) ironically points out that, whereas diffusionist approaches are now being generally regarded as outmoded in ethnography, “for some reason archaeologists do not generally use this argument [i.e. independent invention] for pottery”.

of a "thunder complex" among Indo-Europeans, Southeast Asians, and Amerindians), but a constellation of cultural tropes and linguistic features found within a geographical context with a long history of human interaction. As noted by Blust (1991, p. 518) with reference to the "thunder complex" in Australasia, "the explanation of the psychological or cultural dynamics of a coherent unit of culture... is distinct from the explanation of its distribution across culture".⁵⁷ What I am suggesting here is the possibility of historical contacts that enabled the multi-directional distribution and adoption of certain tropes—such as a "Dark Lord complex"—across Monsoon Asia. Some of the tropes detected by Dentan among the Semai would have been carried by Austroasiatic-speaking Negritos and incorporated into the religion, mythology, and languages of Austronesian-speaking people during their ever-expanding migrations across Southeast Asia and the Pacific, therefore becoming part of their cultural heritage; comparable dynamics could have happened on the opposite shore of the Bay of Bengal. A similar argument has been advanced by Blench (2013) regarding the arc of vegiculture and its cultural correlates stretching between Melanesia and eastern Nepal; by Gupta (2005, p. 22) regarding the distributions of jar burials along the Indo-Pacific arc, suggesting "the possibility of interactivity and sharing of otherworldly precepts from East Asia to South Asia"; and by Manguin (1996, p. 191), who speaks about "a fair amount of interchange and cross-fertilization, if not of homogeneity in technical traditions" across the western and eastern shores of the Bay of Bengal. Brighenti's (2009, p. 63) arguments concerning the South

⁵⁷ Blust (1991) characterizes the "thunder complex" as one of the most distinctive and widespread ethnological markers known in Southeast Asia. This cultural complex, which is focally concerned with the belief that mockery of animals will precipitate a punitive thunderstorm entailing some type of physical transformation of the offender, is known among the Semai and many other tribal societies in the Philippines, Borneo and Eastern Indonesia. According to Blust (*ibid.*, p. 517), even though "nativized and augmented with features it probably did not have in its original form", this complex could still be traced back "to a prehistoric society which was ancestral not only to the modern Austronesian-speaking societies of western and eastern Indonesia, but also to those of Oceania". A wider discussion of linguistic and cultural features supporting a common Negrito ancestry across Southeast Asia may be found in Blust 2013.

Asian Tantric instantiations of human sacrifice are directly relevant to the present discussion, positing as they do that “continuous interchange of socioreligious customs and of mythical, doctrinal, and ritual elements relating to human sacrifice has taken place since protohistoric epochs in the Indian subcontinent”, and had as its vectors the “people of the Veda” as well as people of disparate ethnic origins and linguistic background (viz. Dravidian, Austroasiatic, Austronesian, and Tibeto-Burman).

On the basis of the quantitatively scant, but qualitatively significant, cumulative evidence presented in this chapter, I consider positions 3 and 4 the most likely. These hypotheses are not mutually exclusive, as they do not preclude the occurrence of two-way contacts. In the specific, one may hypothesize that a certain ideology or mythologeme might have returned to its place of origin after centuries of independent development in an outlying geographic and cultural context (compare Witzel’s “imagined investigation” quoted above). This model, along with the “Monsoon Asian shared cultural matrix”, could help explain why certain ideas and practices that once existed in the Indian Subcontinent could so easily be revived or connected with those still found in other parts of the Indic world, namely mainland and insular Southeast Asia. In short, the fundamental affinity between cultural traits/trajectories in South and Southeast Asia would be due to historical processes of multi-directional interaction, transfer, and filiation, which could have taken place in the context of an interconnected geo-environmental area. More importantly, the continuous presence in the Indian Subcontinent of Austroasiatic-speaking people, who most likely shared an early core of socio-cultural features with their “cousins” in Southeast Asia, suggests that these contacts and transfers are not a mere theoretical possibility. The attestation of Sanskrit loanwords among the South and Southeast Asian tribals and, concomitantly, of Austroasiatic loanwords in Sanskrit and Middle Indo-Aryan languages, further supports this scenario of long-standing historical connections. These connections, inferred on the basis of recent archaeological findings, have been described by Manguin as a “millenium-long phase of exchange” (2011, p. xvi) that predates the beginnings of “Indianization” in the third–fifth centuries CE, when “the relationship between Southeast Asian and Indian societies had already come a very long way” (ibid., p. xix).

Whatever the case may be, this chapter makes a case to de-parochialize the study of Indic religions, so as to transcend the intellectual and geopolitical boundaries that, unduly compartmentalizing this cross-cultural subject of enquiry, hamper our understanding of the larger picture. I cannot but side with Samuel who, noting the “arbitrary nature of regional traditions of intellectual inquiry”, calls for a change of perspective in trying to look at Tibeto-Burman-speaking societies of Tibet, Ladakh, Nepal and Sikkim as part of Southeast Asia rather than Central or South Asia—the rationale being that the Tibeto-Burman linguistic family has been biased towards South and Central Asia, yet Eastern India belongs culturally more to Southeast Asia than South Asia (2005, pp. 199–200).⁵⁸ Warning us not to confuse analytic categories with reality, and expressing the need to “move beyond the parochial concerns to which it... has so often been restricted”, Samuel (*ibid.*, p. 208) points out that

Frameworks to which Tibetanists have become attached for historical reasons are not necessarily the most appropriate, and that the kind of shift in perspective which I have described may be a valuable supplement and corrective to our established practices.

In a similar fashion, in his analysis of the “Demonological Cosmopolis”, White (2012, pp. 164–65) recognizes that

While it remains useful to speak of regional or local traditions (Bengali Tantra, for example), it is totally inappropriate to assume that translocal traditions conform to modern geopolitical maps of the Indian subcontinent. Hindu Tantra is ‘Indic’ only to the extent that KGB [i.e. Kashmir, Gandhara, and Bactria], Nepal, and even the Tarim Basin are parts of India, which they are not.

Analogous considerations could be extended to Southeast Asia and its “Indic” religions. As Samuel (2011, p. 348) notes when discussing the theoretical framework of his monograph *The Origins of Yoga and Tantra* (2008),

⁵⁸ A similar argument was advanced by Kunstadter (1967, p. 205), who included Eastern India in Southeast Asia on account of linguistic and cultural similarities: “Just as the southern boundary of China does not mark a cultural or linguistic division, the eastern border of India does not mark off a cultural or linguistic area”.

India as we know it today is a very recent entity. It is all too easy to think of the development of ‘Hinduism’ or at least of ‘Indian religions’ as a process that took place within a territory called ‘India’ and which corresponds roughly to present-day India or even to the rather problematic wider region called ‘South Asia’ for purposes of Western academia.... I deliberately worked Southeast Asia into the account throughout the book, in part to stress that the adoption of Brāhmanical religion was an ongoing process and that Cambodia was in much the same position in relation to this process, if at a slightly later date, than Bengal or South India. It is important to understand these processes within a *common frame*. The fact that we now have an India that is mainly Hindu and a Southeast Asia that is Buddhist, Muslim and so on is a much later development, and we need to think back to a *quite different sort of geography* to make sense of these earlier periods. *This is not a dramatically new thing to say, but the consequences of working it into the account was to bring up some issues that had not been raised so clearly by many previous authors.* (emphasis mine)

Key concepts here are the “common frame”, and the “quite different sort of geography”, which Samuel invokes to make sense of the complex religious and cross-cultural processes that occurred over an extended period of time throughout a large swathe of continental and maritime Asia. I would add a “quite different sort of history” too, which would help us to make sense of phenomena whose roots lie in a remote past, i.e. an older core of religious beliefs, practices, and mythologies that is difficult to reconstruct given the scantness of the records that have survived the ravages of time. I believe, however, that the lack of textual and archaeological evidence should not deter scholars from elaborating wider-ranging narratives that include a remote past to explain premodern and modern phenomena on the basis of data analysed from the perspective of comparative mythology and religion, historical linguistics, and with insights from modern and contemporary ethnography. More research on the small-scale societies of South and Southeast Asia and their historical interactions with Sanskritic ideologies and Indic cosmopolitan societies is needed to test Dentan’s provocative hypothesis.

To date, the prevalent attitude among contemporary Indologists towards the manifestations of Indic religions and cultural traits in

Southeast Asia has not gone beyond the uncritical subscription to a monodirectional "Hinduization" paradigm; on the other hand, the majority of Southeast Asianists has tended to favour an "indigenistic" paradigm, stressing Southeast Asian agency in the "localization" of Indic ideas and practices. Concomitantly, Indologists have predilected an orthogenetic paradigm to explain the emergence of the phenomenon of Tantrism in South Asia from a (late) Vedic matrix. On the other hand, as rightly noted by Brighenti (2009, p. 95), to explain the various stages of the process of tribal-Śākta interactions in the Indian Subcontinent we "may necessitate moving beyond the ancient limits of Vedic India". In fact, one may even include the Vedic "antecedents" of Tantrism in a wider-ranging analysis that approaches the study of Indic religions "from the East", so to speak, as partaking of a shared cultural matrix out of which parallel developments originated across the Bay of Bengal and South China Sea, in the context of a millenia-long shared history. In order to do so, it would perhaps be appropriate to revive, and refine, the "Monsoon Asia perspective" elaborated by early twentieth century scholarship. By extending the field of study to the wider geo-environmental area of Monsoon Asia, the synthesis advocated here would regard seemingly convergent religious and cultural phenomena as the outcome of multi-directional and circulatory processes rather than separate, self-contained entities, and propose a possible shared ancestry.

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4

CAN WE RECONSTRUCT A “MALAYO-JAVANIC” LAW AREA?

Alexandra Landmann

This chapter suggests the reconstruction of a hypothesized ethno-linguistic “Malayo-Javanic cultural and law area”, and pinpoints lines of evidence to delineate the boundaries of such an area. On the basis of secondary literature, and previous fieldwork on indigenous and traditional legal systems (*adat*, *pikukuh karuhun*, *dresta*) in Bali, Banten and Central Kalimantan, it uses historical anthropology and a triangulation of linguistic, archaeological and biological evidence (Sapir 1916) to reconstruct a “Malayo-Javanic law area”.

The chapter first outlines a polythetic approach to a Western Malayo-Polynesian (WMP) cultural complex. Second, it sketches my idea of a multi-layered model of the settlement process of Sunda and Sahul and the later Austronesian expansion, as well as a Western Malayo-Polynesian language node. It outlines the idea of a “Malayo-Javanic cultural area” and *adat* as a form of social control and of a “Malayo-Javanic law area”. It presents an integrated hypothesis on religion as the source of a possible scenario supporting the cultural advantage of the WMP. The

model of *adat* is thus a contemporary trajectory of the “Western Malayo-Polynesian civilization”.

1. A Polythetic Approach to a Western Malayo-Polynesian Cultural Complex

The term Austronesian has supplanted an older adjective *Malayo-Polynesian*, to identify a language phylum spoken by handsome, brown-skinned people across a vast expanse of the Pacific, from Eastern Island to Indonesia, and westward to an outlier in Madagascar. Relatively small cultural differences are recognized by subdivision into areas called Polynesia, Micronesia, Indonesia, Melanesia and Madagascar [...].

Doran Jr. (1981, pp. 8, emphasis in original)

Today, Austronesian studies is a well-established academic field. A variety of disciplines, such as archaeology, linguistics, genetics, anthropology, palaeobotany, ethnomusicology, art and zoogeography, contribute new perspectives to an enhanced understanding of the Austronesian languages speaking world. The Austronesian language phylum covers a vast geographical area halfway the globe from Madagascar in the west to the Eastern Island in the east, from Taiwan and Hawaii in the north and to New Zealand in the south. According to linguist Robert Blust (1977 in Adelaar 2005b, p. 9), nine of the ten primary subgroups of Austronesian languages are attested only on Taiwan. The tenth subgroup, Malayo-Polynesian (henceforth MP, on the origin of the term see Ross 1996) comprises all of the 1,200 Austronesian languages spoken outside Taiwan. In the history of Austronesian Studies, the term MP has physical, linguistic, sociocultural and geographic connotations. I use the term MP here to refer to

- 1) the linguistic subgroup branching from the Austronesian language tree—that is the 1,200 languages spoken from Madagascar to Hawaii, minus the languages spoken in Taiwan (see Himmelmann 2005, pp. 110–11), and
- 2) the geographic area in which MP languages are spoken.

MP languages are divided into Western Malayo-Polynesian (henceforth WMP) and Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian (henceforth CEMP; see Blust 1977 in Nothofer 1991, p. 388; Adelaar 2005*b*; Lynch 2002, p. 4). WMP is spoken in the Philippines, Malaysia and most of Indonesia as well as in Madagascar; one group of languages (Chamic) is spoken in Cambodia, Vietnam and China, and there are two Pacific outlier languages. CEMP is spoken in eastern Indonesia and in the archipelagos of Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia as well as in some areas of New Guinea. CEMP is further divided in South Halmahera-West New Guinea and Oceanic. Adelaar (2005*b*, p. 9) notes: “The classification of Austronesian languages proposed by Blust (1977 and later) is not without its problems [...]. Nevertheless, it is the one that is referred to most frequently in recent literature [...]”. This classification served as a point of reference in Adelaar and Himmelmann (2005*b*) as well as in Lynch (2002).

The population history of the Indo-Pacific region shows that highly-mobile, small sailing communities, as well as climate change ~6–60 ka BC shaped circulatory dynamics and plurality as an intrinsic feature of the geographic area where Austronesian languages are spoken today. Peter Bellwood (in Bellwood, Fox and Tryon 2006, p. 4, emphasis in original) observed:

[...] in order to approach questions of Austronesian history and common ancestry [...] we need to keep separate [...], biology, language and culture [...]. Languages, populations and cultures evolve, diversify and mix through different, albeit conceptually overlapping, mechanisms. When considering something on the whole Austronesian scale it would be naïve to assume that linguistic, cultural and biological entities and their boundaries must correlate precisely, or will ever have done so in any absolute way, although *relatively* high degrees of coordination and correlation, despite variations, are an essential part of the concept of a phylogenetic unit.

Even if physical, sociocultural, and linguistic diversity appears to be salient throughout the Austronesian world, we can identify traits common to a “cultural complex” (Sapir 1916, p. 15), “cultural genus” (Sahlins 1958, p. ix in Kirch and Green 2001, p. 16), “cultural area” (Josselin de

Jong 1977, p. 167) or “cultural region” (Kirch and Green 2001, p. 6), and advance hypotheses as to where its distinctive boundaries—albeit overlapping and intersecting—are to be drawn. For example, the area inhabited by speakers of the Oceanic languages is divided into three “cultural areas”: Melanesia in the west, Micronesia in the north, and Polynesia in the south (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002; Kirch and Green 2001). In these areas, the linguistic and archaeological accounts are commonly accepted and there is much less controversy than with respect to the classifications developed for Island Southeast Asia (henceforth ISEA), “Indonesia” (Doran 1981, p. 8), or the area in which “Western Austronesian languages” are spoken (Himmelman 2005, p. 111).

Edward Sapir (1916, p. 15) promoted the idea of a “cultural complex”, not “the whole of a culture” but a “definite nucleus of associated traits” (ibid., p. 30) that are able to travel, “to ‘diffuse’ together from society to society, without requiring the people adopting them to abandon all their old ways (their former ‘culture’) in favor of these new ones” (Terrell 2008, p. 76). By 1935, the Dutch anthropologist Josselin de Jong (1977, pp. 167–68) had identified the Indonesian Archipelago as a field of comparative ethnographic study of Indonesian societies and recognized a “cultural type/area”¹ and a “structural core” among the populations in Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands (see also Bellwood, Fox and Tryon 2006, and Dentan, this volume). In his attempt to investigate the genealogies/trajectories of culture, the characterization of cultural genera and the delimitation of cultural areas, he (ibid., pp. 167–68) advanced the view that the cultures of the people inhabiting the Indonesian Archipelago appeared to be “sufficiently homogenous, to form a separate object of ethnological study, which at the same time apparently reveals sufficient local shades of differences to make internal comparative research worthwhile”. Marshall Sahlins in his classic comparative analysis of Polynesian

¹ On the *Kulturkreislehre*, see Dentan, Blench this volume. On “Austronesians as a Phylogenetic Unit”, see Bellwood, Fox and Tryon 2006, pp. 1–4; on Polynesians, see Kirch and Green 2001, on Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia see Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002.

cultures, made use of a biological metaphor when he wrote that “the Polynesian cultures derive from a single source; they are members of a single cultural genus that has filled in and adapted to a variety of local habitats” (Kirch and Green 2001, p. 16, referring to Sahlins 1958, p. ix).

A “Western Malayo-Polynesian cultural genus” or a “WMP cultural complex” should have a definite nucleus of associated traits that has filled in and adapted to a variety of localities. Apparently, such a WMP cultural complex has progressively grown out of a pre-Austronesian offshore and/or Asian “substratum” (see Nothofer 1991; Anderson 2005), succeeding convergence and cultural contact with WMP speakers, and later experiencing distinctive processes of Indicization that diversified into a pre- and post-Islamic “Javansphere” and “Malayosphere”. While we can detect a strong Javanese or Malayic impact with relation to political organization and religious institutionalization, we do not know much about where prehistoric and pre-Islamic internal boundaries of smaller areas might be drawn and to which extent cultural traits overlap or diverge.

David L. Clarke (1968, p. 357) already mentioned the difficulties in comprehending the pre-Austronesian Hoabinhian phenomenon as either a culture, tradition, or industry; he defined the Hoabinhian techno-complex as “[a] group of cultures characterized by assemblages sharing a polythetic range but differing specific types of the same general families of artifact-types [...]” (ibid.). Spriggs (2012, p. 115) proposes a polythetic model for understanding the Neolithic in ISEA:

There is an increasing recognition of the complexity of Neolithic spread in ISEA, and a complex situation requires complex models. There is a need to get away from earlier conceptions of a simple monolithic and monothetic (to use David Clarke’s 1968 term) Neolithic “package” where all artefact types are expected to occur at all sites. We should in fact expect a distinctively polythetic (Clarke’s term again) set of artefacts and practices, as a colonizing group moves through varied environments with changing resources, and encounters a variety of in situ or indigenous cultures with their own effective local adaptations.

I think it is useful to apply the polythetic approach also called a “family resemblance approach” (see Wittgenstein 2009) to Austronesian studies in order to capture the main features of the controversial WMP cultural complex: shared ancestry on the one hand, and culture- and region-specific diversifications induced by convergence and cultural contact on the other. The approach provides a middle path between essentialist and functionalist approaches to definition. In the anthropological theory of religion as a cultural system, we find essentialist and functional definitions of religions that are either monothetic or polythetic. Those terms derive from Greek for either one, alone (*mono-*) or many, much (*poly-*) that are “capable of placing”, as in one-placement and many-placements. Monothetic definitions presume a single characteristic or limited set of necessary characteristics or purposes, whereas polythetic definitions identify a range of traits or functions, none of which is sufficient in order for the object to qualify as a member of a class, but a certain combination or cluster of traits is necessary to identify membership (Landmann 2013). Wittgenstein (2009, p. 36) coined the term “family resemblances” to denote that “complicated net-work of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: similarities in the large and in the small” of a delimited series of characteristics or cluster of similar traits.

When applied to Austronesian studies, a polythetically defined cultural complex, or cultural genus and its aspects of shared ancestry, does not necessarily imply a single homeland or prototypical genus, a completely shared set of cultural traits, or a necessary correspondence between genetics, language, and “tangible and intangible culture” (Manguin 2011). Members of the family overlap to varying degrees and in differing respects, despite their best efforts to portray themselves as authoritative, no family member constitutes the definitive instance of the group—rather, all members share in the identity to varying degrees. Moreover, group membership is never a matter of yes or no (as in the essentialist approach) but always a matter of degree and affinities a matter of “more or less” (Landmann 2013, p. 11, see Doran 1981, pp. 86–87 for an approach to map the complexity of traits for *wangka*, and Mahdi this volume). In brief, members of a family do not share an

“essence”, i.e. defining characteristic marks (*Merkmale*); but they share a “specifiable nature” (see Wittgenstein 2009, p. 250, Editor’s Notes to *Philosophical Investigations*).

This chapter identifies preliminary evidence of trajectories/genealogies and family resemblances or a “specifiable nature” among the WMP speaking peoples found by archaeological research, linguistics, and genetics by applying ethno-historical methodology (Sapir 1916). WMP-speaking peoples avoid monothetic definitions, comparable to various religious cultures found on the Indian subcontinent and in Indonesia that today we label “Hinduism”, whose genealogies refuse to be integrated into a monothetic definition. With regard to Hinduism, Doniger (2009, p. 25, emphasis in original) remarked that one “objection to regarding Hinduism as a monolithic entity is that it is hard to spell out what ‘they [the Hindus] all’ believe and do [...]”. She (ibid., p. 28) points to scholars who have attempted “to identify a cluster of qualities each of which is important to Hinduism; not every Hindu will believe in, or do, all of them, but each Hindu will adhere to some combination of them, as a non-Hindu would not”. After having enlisted a few of those traits, she (ibid., pp. 28–29) continues that:

[t]his polythetic approach, which owes much to the concept of family resemblances laid out by the philosopher Wittgenstein, could be represented by a Venn diagram, a chart made of intersecting circles. It might be grouped into sectors of different colors [...]. But since there is no central quality that all Hindus must have, the emptiness of the center [...] suggests that the figure might better named a Zen diagram [...] that has no central ring. [...] The configuration of the clusters of Hinduism’s defining characteristics changes through time, through space and through each individual.

We might produce an analogous Venn diagram of an Austronesian, respectively a Malayo-Polynesian cultural complex that portrays a cluster of traits. This diagram, however, would have to be graphically represented for the Indo-Pacific region as a whole, where Malayo-Polynesian languages are spoken; this area would exclude Taiwan, but include the WMP geographic region and its linguistic outliers, as well as Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia. Some traits that appear in

the Proto-MP language community and seem therefore to make out the qualities of an ancient WMP cultural complex:

- 1) ancestor-oriented kin groups or descent groups (Blust 1980, in Blust 1993, p. 24);
- 2) the pervasive use of botanical metaphors to express the concept of growth from an origin (Fox et al. 1995; Fox 1980, in Lansing et al. 2011, p. 263);
- 3) matrilocality, and status and autonomy for women (Jordan 2009);
- 4) founder-focused ideology relating to both genitor and genetrix lines of descent (Bellwood in Lansing et al. 2011, p. 263);
- 5) apical demotion of these lines of descent, with an emphasis on elder/younger relationships (Fox et al. 1995, in Lansing et al. 2011, p. 263);
- 6) the spatial and social ordering of space along fundamental two- and (later) four-axis systems as orientation systems in space (Fox 2006b, p. 5; Blust 1993, pp. 23–24), and social relations framed in terms of inner and outer; (Fox 2006b, p. 8) “Topogenies take a great variety of forms among Austronesian populations. They may recount the journey of an ancestor, the migration of a group, or the transmission of an object”;
- 7) a rule of matrilateral cross-cousin marriage, or asymmetric alliance (Blust 1993, pp. 23–24);
- 8) marked localization in material culture, or small-scale societies and local economies that tend to be characterized by a development of specialized craft communities/exchange systems (Bellina-Price this volume);
- 9) canoe-complex (use of outriggers on canoes, sailing technology, terms for marine life) (Doran 1981);
- 10) tattooing;
- 11) weaving;
- 12) headhunting/feuding, or avoidance mechanisms to reduce such practices (Landmann and Fathurrokman 2013);
- 13) religious tropes: religious activities focussed on shamanism, ancestor veneration, earth and mountains, stone sanctuaries, blood

sacrifice, and the acquisition of supernatural power (Dentan, Acri, this volume).

Robert Blust’s pioneering work (2013, 2010, 1991, 1993, 1981) and Blust’s Online *Austronesian Comparative Dictionary* provide clues on where ethno-linguistic traits should be regarded as a) convergence, or independent invention, b) diffusion (historical contact, with borrowing), or c) common inheritance (linear transmission from a common cultural antecedent) (see Blust’s 1981 typology of culture trait distribution). Processes of establishment in new habitats and local recruitment of indigenous settlers shaped the Austronesian dispersal; as a consequence, tangible and intangible culture moved from space to space or media to media answering local challenges and demands promoting retentions, adaptations, elaborations of intrusive patterns, and producing innovations, borrowing or convergences with pre-existent local mechanisms (see Blust 1981; Kirch and Green 2001). Due to the geographic extent of the region, the mix of indigenous, intrusive, and innovative elements of tangible and intangible culture would be subject to frequent and manifold changes according to the new local human and environmental situations encountered by the settlers. In the context of Austronesian tangible culture, Spriggs (2012, p. 115) observes:

Mobile maritime based Neolithic groups could have re-adopted dropped elements of any cultural package as they leapfrogged across the region [...]. Any putative design system could move on and off various media, perhaps on house posts or cloth here, on pottery there, or in rock art. Only some of these media can be expected to survive, giving a palimpsest of perhaps more widespread patterns.

2. Population Processes of the Sunda Shelf: “All I Know is that I Know Nothing”

This part will discuss theories on the population process of the Sunda shelf to substantiate the necessity of a polythetic approach to Austronesian studies. Who did actually carry traits of the here posited WMP cultural complex? According to Mahdi (this volume), the first

inhabitants of Sunda and Sahul were Australoids without necessarily constituting an assumed or actual biogenetic unity. Mahdi divides them on a geographical basis into Negritos when located to the west of Halmahera, New Guinea and Timor; Papuans, when located on the islands or further east; and Australian Aborigines. Moreover, Austronesian-speaking populations indicate that their dispersal involved populations of two distinct phenotypes, 1) the dispersal of *Qata* or Australoids of a dark skin complexion that 2) was followed by migration of *Tau* with a lighter skin complexion.

Presumably the western part of Indonesia would have been inhabited during the Pleistocene by Australoid hunters, fishers and foragers that coexisted and mixed with incoming Asian hunters, fishers and foragers at the Pleistocene-Holocene junction. During the mid-Holocene coastal environments stabilized and small groups of Austronesian-speaking fishers, swidden farmers and foragers appeared in the region. As all these groups were in contact and exchange, they would have 1) developed a complex genetic picture by intermarriage, 2) adopted WMP languages, probably due to a cultural advantage of Austronesian languages speakers, and 3) developed permanent agricultural systems and residence pattern around the first centuries during the Common Era.

In the following, I summarize Allen and O'Connell's (2008, 2012) model for the colonization of Sunda, Wallacea, the Bismarcks, and Sahul, as it aptly exemplifies the processes for how and why the region has been settled by human groups of different phenotypes (*Qata* and *Tau*, Mahdi this volume) before and during "some level of emigration from Taiwan into ISEA" (Bulbeck 2008, p. 32). ISEA was inhabited by modern humans ~ 38–68 ka BC (Hill et al. 2007) who migrated eastwards between ~ 43–48 ka BC—the impulse for movement may have come from the build-up of human populations on the Asian mainland (Allen and O'Connell 2008, 2012). During the Pleistocene, the islands on the Sunda shelf, such as Sumatra, Java, Bali, Borneo and many smaller islands, were directly united through dry land with Mainland Southeast Asia (henceforth MSEA), forming a continent dubbed Sundaland. The region was therefore split between the continent of Sunda, offshore Palawan, Wallacea, which included the islands east of Wallace's line and the Bismarck's (see Solheim 1972, p. 36; O'Connor 2007; and Allen

and O’Connell 2008 for maps) and the giant continent Sahul, which comprised Australia and Papua New Guinea.²

Allen and O’Connell (2012, p. 7) suggest that population growth in Sunda and Sahul was in general “disrupted by the frequent, high amplitude climate changes characteristic of Marine Isotope Stage 3 (MIS-3, 28–59 ka BP)”, and that “[s]hallow tidal flats and estuaries of the sort that supported large human populations in late Holocene times were high-ranked when present, but rare and short-lived throughout most of MIS-3 due to the frequency and amplitude of sea-level change and the time required for productive habitats to be re-established” (ibid., p. 8). The overall climatic conditions facilitated infrequent, short-term occupation by small, highly mobile human groups of *Qata* (Australoid phenotype) and progressively *Tau* (Asian phenotype) foragers and seafarers (ibid., pp. 8, 11) who practised economies based on the exploitation of intermediate- and high-ranked plant and animal foods in coastal areas and estuaries (O’Connor 2006, 2007; Allen and O’Connell 2008, 2012). Thus, the late Pleistocene migrations into Sahul might be interpreted as the product of climatic instability, when modern humans crossed Wallacea as a consequence of specialized foraging behaviour

² During the mid-Pleistocene glaciations, accumulation of water in glaciers and ice caps produced sea levels approximately 160 m lower than at present, and during the late-Pleistocene (~ 16–18 ka BC) about 120 m lower than at present (Smith 2000, p. 275). Three major floods ~ 14 ka BC, ~ 11 ka BC (Pleistocene–Holocene junction), and ~ 8 ka BC triggered a significant rise in sea levels up to their current levels (Soares et al., p. 2011). This sea level rise separated continental Asia and Sundaland and contemporary western ISEA appeared. Sulawesi was apparently never connected by dry land to Sundaland and MSEA (Smith 2000, p. 275). The degree by which the Philippine islands were connected to Sundaland and MSEA/Asia had been influenced by the changes in the sea levels that continue to affect the islands on the Sunda shelf. The islands of the Palawan island chain were united into a larger island (Greater Palawan) that connected to MSEA through Borneo in the mid-Pleistocene, but not during the late-Pleistocene (ibid., p. 275). The Philippine oceanic islands were never connected to MSEA, but formed larger units or mega islands of Greater Luzon, Greater Mindanao, and Greater Negros-Panay (ibid., p. 275). Whether Greater-Luzon and Greater Mindanao joined in the mid-Pleistocene is uncertain (ibid., pp. 275–76). The Palawan chain between Borneo and Mindoro and the Sulu Archipelago between Borneo and Mindanao may have served as “stepping stones” (ibid., p. 275) between Borneo and the oceanic islands of the Philippines.

using watercraft of sufficient size or number to transport founding populations of a minimum of a hundred individuals which would select the most suitable natural habitats at coastal and estuarine regions. Parts of Sunda had poor vegetation a low-ranked plant and animal foods. The very early faunal and animal transport from New Guinea was necessary to make these regions more fertile.

As suggested by archaeological evidence (see Bulbeck 2008 for an overview), the ensuing drowning of Sunda and Sahul at the Pleistocene–Holocene junction ~ 11 ka BC led to the emergence of new social, economic, technological, and demographic patterns for translocation of people, animals, gems, exotic materials and plants. When sea levels rose after the Last Glaciations Maximum between ~ 6 – 12 ka BC, the Sunda shelf was flooded, which caused migrations and the development of maritime exchange between populations on the remnant Sundaland Islands (especially Borneo and Palawan) and populations in Wallacea. Specific Haplogroups associated exclusively with Austronesian speakers begin to diversify following the first flood ~ 14 ka BC, but virtually starburst with onset of the second and third flood ~ 11 ka BC and ~ 8 ka BC, especially after the stabilization of coastal environments ~ 6 ka BC. After the stabilization of coastal environments, the speakers of a language, today termed Austronesian, made their appearance in the South China Sea and the Pacific.

Various origin-dispersal models have been proposed to explain the expansion of an Austronesian complex from an assumed Asian or offshore homeland giving rise to the Austronesian Diaspora. Multi-linear models suggest an offshore ISEA maritime homeland (Solheim 1984–85; Meacham 1984–85; Oppenheimer 1998, 2006), whereas one uni-linear models proposes South China as homeland and subsequent migration to Taiwan and then “out of Taiwan” into the Indo-Pacific (Bellwood 1997, 2004, 2006; Grey 2009). Lansing et al. (2011, p. 263) pointedly observe: “Despite decades of debate there is as yet no consensus on either the geographic origins of the Austronesian expansion, or the social mechanisms that led to the adoption of Austronesian language and cultural traits by so many societies across the Pacific”. An increasing consensus, however, consolidates to give up the idea of the more recent uni-directional dispersal of Austronesian speaking farmers from a

clearly identified homeland in South China/Taiwan replacing indigenous Papuan foragers and hunters (on two short discussions, see Bulbeck 2008, pp. 31–32; Oppenheimer 2006; also Blench 2012). It seems, however, that the discussion has not yet yielded a satisfying and uncontroversial common understanding. In the following I summarize the two models.

Based on linguistic and archaeological data (Blust 1987; Bellwood 1997, 2004, 2006), the “Austronesian hypothesis”, the “Out of Taiwan” event or the “Express Train from Taiwan to Polynesia” (Oppenheimer 2006, p. 65) pictures the prehistory of ISEA in a two-layered model of two population dispersals: the initial colonization of Sundaland and Sahul by Australoid foragers and hunters ~ 45–48 ka BC and a much later expansion of Asian Austronesian-speaking farmers from Taiwan ~ 2–4 ka BC. The expansion or migration of those farmers was propelled by “*riziculture*” (Bulbeck 2008, p. 38) and demographic growth. During their migration from Southern China to Taiwan ~ 5 ka BC, they carried a marked Neolithic assemblage including pigs, dogs, chickens, rice, red slipped pottery, stone adzes, and distinctive types of jewellery. After a considerable delay in Taiwan, which gave rise to language-diversification of Formosan languages spoken in Taiwan and the Malayo-Polynesian languages, some groups left Taiwan ~ 2.5–4 ka BC, developed elaborate watercraft skills and pulsed into ISEA via the Luzon Strait to the Philippines, Borneo, and Sulawesi, and to Island Melanesia, and Near and Remote Oceania. These Malayo-Polynesian sailors eventually replaced the earlier Papuan foragers-hunters and their languages. The tangible media of their arrival in Island Melanesia is the Lapita culture. Its pottery first appeared on the coasts of the Bismarck Archipelago ~ 3.1–3.3 ka BC (Soares et al. 2011) and then spread across the Pacific islands into Remote Oceania. Around 1.5–2 ka BC, some groups hived off from ISEA and sailed to the East African coast colonizing Madagascar.

The uni-directional model outlined above appears to be mainly accepted for the Oceanic language node, and the fast and rapid settlement process of the many—mostly uninhabited— islands scattered throughout the Pacific. But the “Out of Taiwan” model faces serious challenges with regard to 1) the inclusion of climatic instability; 2) the settlement

of the Western part of ISEA, most notably the Philippines, Borneo, Sulawesi, Java, and Sumatra; 3) models of long-lasting coexistence and cultural contact; 4) social mechanisms that led to the adoption of Austronesian languages; and 5) subsistence strategies. Likewise, it is still open to question 1) where did the people speaking Austronesian languages originate—in South China or in maritime offshore ISEA? 2) How did the history of populating the enormous region in which we encounter the contemporary speakers of Austronesian proceed? And 3) whether Austronesian language speakers ever shared a common cultural complex or a set of shared tangible and intangible culture apart from their language. In my view, the two-layer settlement model does not capture the complexity of demographic history of the Sundaland region, as genetics and recent archaeological evidence strengthen heterogeneity, contact and convergence rather than an abrupt transition in the region.

Various multi-linear models (Solheim 1984–85; Solheim, Bulbeck, and Flavel 2006; Oppenheimer 1998, 2006) argue for an offshore ISEA maritime homeland and support a maritime theory on Austronesian origins (see also Doran 1981, pp. 86–87, Fig 50 who identifies eight to ten of the total twelve Austronesian boat traits in an area centred on Sulawesi). Solheim (1984–85) named the Austronesian speaking sailors who expanded from their homeland that connected central Vietnam, northern Borneo, Palawan and Luzon across the South China Sea the “*Nusantao*”. Oppenheimer (1998) argued rightly that the drowning of Sundaland at the Pleistocene–Holocene junction triggered the maritime expansion of the early Austronesians. This thesis of migrations related to late Quaternary sea level rises has been given strong support from the genetic analyses by Hill et al. (2007) and Soares et al. (2011).

Trying to consolidate the debates on the Austronesian homeland, Blanchard et al. (ibid., p. 24) argue that a root for Proto-AN in ISEA would integrate archaeological evidence that places ISEA at the centre and Taiwan at the periphery of population dispersals experiencing only sporadic mainland influence during the Pleistocene–Holocene junction. During the Holocene, the languages most likely emerged within ISEA. This model would imply an early offshoot to Taiwan and “subsequent levelling of language diversity across the Malayo-Polynesian area as a

result of the formation of extensive socio-economic networks” (ibid., p. 24)—that might have transported a religious system.

Additionally, evidence exists for recent smaller mid-Holocene dispersal from Taiwan to ISEA, but not to Near Oceania or Remote Oceania. While Soares et al.’s (2011, pp. 244–45) findings dismiss any substantial maternal ancestry in Taiwan for Polynesians, they do not preclude an Austronesian linguistic dispersal from Taiwan to Oceania ~ 3–4 ka BC, mediated by social networks rather than directly by people of Taiwanese ancestry but perhaps involving small numbers of migrants at various times. The mtDNA patterns point to the possibility of a staged series of dispersals of small numbers of Austronesian speakers, each followed by a period of extensive acculturation and language shift.

It seems therefore reasonable to assume that spheres of social interactions and circulation of values, ideas, people and goods between South China, MSEA, ISEA, Near Oceania and Australia existed throughout the end of the Pleistocene and during the course of the Holocene. Seasonal two-way sea journeys westward and eastward would have been facilitated by winds, currents, and island inter-visibility. The voyaging and/or settling groups were required to remain in contact with their origin or other offshoots in order to exchange spouses/mates and they would intermarry with the earlier settlers too. Linguistic reconstructions show that the terminology associated with the outrigger canoe complex can only be traced back to Proto-Malayo-Polynesian and not Proto-Austronesian (see Lansing et al. 2011, p. 265, Mahdi this volume).

Bulbeck (2008, p. 32) assumes that the further east the MP-speaking groups sailed, the more they abandoned rice as staple and switched to root and tree crops. This switch from a rice-growing economy to vegiculture and arboriculture was propelled by climatic constraints and the natural habitats they encountered in eastern ISEA and Near Oceania. It seems that the settlement process of ISEA and Oceania was influenced by the ability of the MP groups “to combine exploitation of maritime environments with the planting of locally-adapted crops which could be productively harvested with minimal tending” (Bulbeck 2008, p. 32). These groups may have learnt local production techniques

from interaction with indigenous populations. One might therefore describe the MP expansion as opportunistic: initially, “fisher-foragers” (Bulbeck 2008) and, later, “raiders and traders” (Blench 2012, p. 127) dispersed on various routes forth and backward through the archipelago, perhaps trading prestigious trade goods for staples and tree products with local populations. Thus, these newcomers continuously reinvented themselves, and incorporated innovations into their cultural repertoire.

Linguistic, genetic, archaeological evidence reveal models of coexistence and contact over a long period of time in Sundaland/contemporary ISEA, mobile social interaction spheres, and the presence of pre-Austronesian agriculture in ISEA. Blench (2010) gives an interesting example how to imagine such cultural contacts. Based on striking elements in material culture and similarities in Aslian and Dayak, he suggests the existence of an Austro-Asiatic farming culture on Borneo and Palawan marked by taro and rice, shouldered adzes, paddle-impressed pottery and mouth-organs prior to the Austronesian expansion. The probable origin of this culture was present-day Vietnam. Eventually, Malayo-Polynesian settlers coexisted with them and adopted taro cultivation. A mixed Austroasiatic/Austronesian culture developed, which resulted in language shift. These populations reached peninsular Malaya and Sumatra with paddle-impressed pottery. Subsequent to this there is the Chamic (i.e. Austronesian) migration from SW Kalimantan or a similar Malayic region ~ 2.2 BC.

Based on archaeo-botanical, archaeological and genetic evidence, it seems therefore justified to assume 1) a pre-Austronesian agricultural tradition throughout ISEA and New Guinea; 2) a Neolithic westward migration of New Guinean root and tree crops into eastern ISEA and even further west, which is also attested in linguistics and genetics; 3) since many words associated with *riziculture* have been reconstructed for Proto-Austronesian, early Austronesian speakers were most likely agricultural, and during the course of dispersal throughout ISEA, the ethno-linguistic groups speaking Malayo-Polynesian languages increasingly relied on maritime craft, opportunistic foraging-hunting strategies and the incorporation of local subsistence strategies. Based on genetic, linguistic, and archaeological evidence (see Allen and O’Connell 2008, 2012; Hill et al. 2007; Bulbeck 2008; Spriggs 2012,

Soares et al. 2011; Blench 2012), I assume a sphere of complex social interaction in the Sunda-Sahul region since the late Pleistocene and a four-phase Austronesian *linguistic* colonization model, adapted from Lansing et al. (2011, p. 263) and Mahdi (this volume):

1. the arrival and initial dispersals of mobile, but small groups of the first modern humans, Australoid foragers and hunters in Sunda, Wallacea, the Bismarcks, and Sahul ~ 38–68 ka BC; these dispersals were followed by Asian foragers and hunters ~ 23–52 ka (Allen and O’Connor 2012, p. 8; Hill et al. 2007).
2. later multidirectional dispersals of mobile and small *Qata/Tao*/mixed genotype groups searching for suitable habitats occurred throughout Sunda, Wallacea, the Bismarcks and North Sahul ~ 8–35 ka BC:
 - a. small groups from MSEA and Eastern Asia continuously dispersed into Sunda, Wallacea, and the Bismarcks ~ 3–23 ka BC (Hill et al. 2007; Soares et al. 2011);
 - b. MSEA farmers dispersed into Sunda when the climate and sea levels had stabilized after the Late Glacial Maximum 20 ka BC and established some degree of pre-Austronesian vegiculture (rice, taro). They mixed and/or coexisted with indigenous foragers and hunters—whenever existent—as farmers and foragers coexist today in Peninsular Malaysia, the Philippines, Sulawesi and Borneo.
 - c. Papuan or New Guinean inhabitants spread westwards as a westward translocation of Melanesian vegetative crops and genes into ISEA occurred. Bananas, sago, greater yam, and sugarcane all underwent early domestication in the New Guinea region. These cultivars, and the cultivation practices to them associated, spread into ISEA, where the plants and linguistic terms for them were adopted by PMP speakers upon their arrival ~ 4 ka BC. According to Anderson (2004, p. 37, cf. Soares 2011, p. 245; Hill 2007, p. 39; Hoogervorst, Mahdi this volume), “The vegetative cultivation of these plants evidently occurred within ISEA before any Taiwanese

influences became significant and arguably contributed far more to a change in subsistence in the Neolithic period of the region than did the introduction of rice farming from the north or west”. However, “there was no linear dispersal from east to west” (ibid., p. 37);

3. an Austronesian *linguistic* expansion ~ 2–5 BC or a smaller level of *genetic* dispersals from Taiwan/Batanes across the region of Austronesian speakers throughout the early and mid-Holocene (Anderson 2005; Hill 2007; Bulbeck 2008; Blanchard 2011; Soares 2011), whereas Hill et al. (2007) propose the movement and expansion of indigenous, rather than introgressive mtDNA lineages dated to between 3–13 ka BC; Greenhill and Gray (2005) and Gray, Drummond, and Greenhill (2009) predict an origin of proto-Austronesian ~ 3.23 BC and of Malayo-Polynesian ~ 1.8–2.5 ka BC because the phylogeny of Malayo-Polynesian language node suggests very rapid geographic expansion, with four major expansion pulses and two pauses in Pacific settlement.
4. during the historic era we find influences from southern Asia, Arabia and China and later from Europe.

Having discussed the population process of the Western Indonesia, ISEA and the Indo-Pacific, as well as the Austronesian linguistic expansion, we will now turn to the question if we can find or reconstruct a cultural complex and a law family based on linguistic groupings for that region or a common legal culture in its areas. Therefore I will discuss the WMP language branch first. In this context, I highlight Spriggs’ (2012, p. 115) comment again, which I cited above: “Mobile maritime based Neolithic groups could have re-adopted dropped elements of any cultural package as they leapfrogged across the region [...]”—those above described dispersal and migration processes demonstrate that the polythetic model advocated here as an overlapping and criss-crossing set of affinities and corresponding traits or principles to define a particular group as member of the common cultural complex might be helpful to identify cultural traits and there boundaries.

3. The Western Malayo-Polynesian Branch of Austronesian

Himmelman (2005, p. 111) states that “no well-established term for the non-Oceanic Austronesian languages exists”. Apparently, the internal classifications and genetic affiliations of non-Oceanic Austronesian languages are problematic insofar as they contain isolates and nuclear members that do not seem to form further subgroups. Adelaar (2005*b*, pp. 14–24) discusses in detail the problems related to the clear-cut establishment of an internal classification and subdivision of the genetic classification of WMP languages node;

In contrast to Malayo-Polynesian, WMP does not have a clear linguistic foundation. In the literature, this category is often referred to as if it were an established subgroup, but the linguistic criteria for it have not been formulated and tested properly, and the genetic affiliations of its putative members remain to be investigated.

Adelaar (2005*b*, p. 14)

WMP languages constitute a “convenient ‘catch-all’ category for all MP languages other than CEMP ones” (Blust in Adelaar 2005*b*, p. 14) and include the languages spoken on the Philippines and in western Indonesia (Sumatra, Java, parts of Borneo, Bali, Lombok, West Sumbawa and Sulawesi), the Pacific outliers of Chamorro and Paluan, as well as Moken (sea nomads in Thailand and Myanmar) Sama Bajau (a nuclear language group ranging over the Philippines, Sabah and eastern Indonesia, spoken by sea nomads), Malagasy and Chamic.

Adelaar (2005*b*, pp. 10–14) includes in his genetic categorization of WMP languages: 1) Philippine languages (including various language groups in North Sulawesi), 2) Chamorro (Pacific outlier), 3) Palauan (Pacific Outlier) in Micronesia, 4) Sama Bajau (sea nomads on the Philippines, Sabah, eastern Indonesia), 5) Malayo-Sumbawan (including Malayic, Acehnese, and Chamic, Sundanese, Madurese, Balinese, Sasak, Sumbawanese), 6) Javanese, 7) Moken-Moklen (Mergui archipelago, Myanmar, insular and coastal West Thailand), 8) North Bornean, 9) Kayanic (central and eastern Borneo), 10) Land Dayak (western Borneo), 11) East-Barito (including Malagasy, southeastern Borneo and Madagascar), 12) Barito-Mahakam (East Borneo), 13) West-Barito

(central and southern Borneo), 14) Lampung (South Sumatra), 15) Rejang (Southwest Sumatra), 16) Northwest Sumatra/Barrier Islands, 17) Tomini-Tolitoli (northwestern Sulawesi), 18) Kaili-Pamona (western Sulawesi), 19) Saluan (eastern Sulawesi), 20) Bungku-Tolaki (southeastern Sulawesi), 21) Muno-Buton (southeastern Sulawesi), 22) Wolio-Wotu, (southeastern Sulawesi), 23) South Sulawesi (including Tamanic in Borneo).

If we accept the language family grouping and its nodes for analytical purposes, then we must also be ready to accept the fact that ethnic groups speaking WMP languages share a “WMP cultural complex”, the family resemblances of this “WMP cultural complex” and to varying degrees physical and genetic features, tangible culture (such as pottery, axes, maritime technology, weaving, honey bees, etc.), and intangible culture (such as kinship and marriage patterns, a general precedence of origin, and descent groups, and therefore also a political and legal culture). This shared cultural complex may be derived from a common cultural ancestor, convergence, diffusion, borrowing, or local development (see Blust 1981; Kirch and Green 2001, p. 16). Based on striking similarities in material culture, kinship systems, cosmogony, cosmology and ritual, a polythetically defined WMP cultural complex grew organically following the stabilization of coastal environments in 6,000 BP, the Malayo-Polynesian—linguistic expansion after 4,000 BP. These cultural complexes experienced to varying degrees pre-Islamic processes of Indicization, Javanization or Malayicization that make the reconstruction of the earlier cultural complex difficult.

I will focus here on the “Malayo-Sumbawan”³ language subgroup postulated by Adelaar (2005*a* and 2005*b*) that has a Madurese branch,

³ WMP refers here to that “catch-all” group of languages including the languages spoken in the Philippines and Sulawesi, but not the languages spoken in Taiwan or the Oceanic languages, while Malayo-Sumbawan denotes Adelaar’s (2005*a*, 2005*b*) linguistic subgroup. I borrow Nothofer’s (1985, p. 289) linguistic term Malayic-Javanic to refer to a geographic area inhabited by speakers of Malayo-Sumbawan and Javanese which logically excludes the languages and ethnic groups in Taiwan and the Philippines (see Himmelman 2005, p. 111).

a Sundanese branch, and one branch comprising the Malayic-, Chamic-, and Bali-, Sasak-Sumbawa branches. *The homeland of Malayic is believed to be in West Borneo, although Malay (at least in its literary and standard forms) most likely originated in South Sumatra* (Adelaar 2005b, p. 18). Tentatively, I include Javanese as well as, which Adelaar (2005a, 2005b; Blust 1981 in Nothofer 1985, p. 289) categorizes as an own linguistic group, but Bernd Nothofer (1985, pp. 289, 295, 299) includes Malay, Madurese, Javanese and Sundanese into Proto-Malayo-Javanic. Javanese should have socio-culturally a lot in common with Malayo-Sumbawan. Adelaar (2005b, p. 20) attributes these common features to the linguistic and cultural influence from Java on Bali and Lombok, where the influence of Malay has been rather weak. The influence of Malayic has been strong on its homeland in Borneo, Sumatra, and contemporary Malaysia. Nothofer (1985, p. 290) attributes the similarities in words existing only in Malay and Sundanese to borrowings during intensive historical relations between Srivijaya and Sunda from the seventh century to the eleventh century and in the thirteenth century. “[...] Sundanese was influenced by Malay, but Malay borrowed little from Sundanese. Sundanese nevertheless borrowed a relatively small proportion from Malay compared with the material it borrowed from Javanese” (Nothofer 1985, p. 290). “Both Malay and Javanese have heavily influenced most other languages of western Indonesia, including languages such as Balinese, Sasak, Makasarese, Buginese or Batak and Ngaju-Dayak” (Nothofer 1985, p. 300). Malay would have most likely intervened between Sundanese and Bornean communities with which it was in closer contact (Nothofer 1985, p. 298 referring to Blust 1981, p. 464 in). If Malay and Javanese had a strong impact on other Malayo-Javanic languages, then it follows that cultural perception, and hence concepts of social control, have also been influenced. Acehnese and Chamic must be including into this group due to linguistic and cultural migration processes.

Concerning the classification of WMP, Nothofer (1991, pp. 395–96, see Mahdi 1988 in Nothofer 1991, Mahdi this volume) proposes a two-stage migration of speakers into the region. In his view, the WMP region in Indonesia, the Philippines, Sulawesi, Borneo, Java-Bali-Lombok-Sumbawa, Sumatra and the Barrier Islands formed a rather homogenous

linguistic area in which Pre- or Paleo-WMP languages were spoken. This region intricately reflects the region of the drowned Sundaland. At a later date, speakers of WMP languages intruded into this area, became culturally dominant in western Indonesia, and largely replaced the languages of Pre-Western Malayo-Polynesian origin. Thereby remnants of language communities were left over that scattered around the periphery of the WMP region. Nothofer's (1991, p. 396) "substratum thesis" assumes therefore two separate migrations into Western Austronesia both of which probably originated in the Philippines or Sulawesi. The languages of northern Sulawesi and the central and southern Philippines, together with those of north-west Sumatra and the Barrier Islands, north-west Borneo and central and southern Sulawesi would be Paleo-Malayo-Polynesian, while the Malayo-Chamic, Java-Bali-Sasak and Barito groups are MP. Alternatively, Nothofer's (1991, p. 396) "borrowing hypothesis" assumes that the Malayo-Javanic languages may have extensively influenced most of their surrounding languages around the first centuries AD. Either the Pre-WMP substratum thesis or the borrowing thesis indicate, in my view, that we are justified to assume the later discussed organically grown pre-Islamic and pre-colonial "Malayo-Javanic culture and law area". Hence, WMP languages indicate a two-way migration model and later cultural Indic impact. Undeniably, there has been an extensive Islamic impact too, but I will exclude and ignore this impact, as it is comparable recent, and my primary focus lies in precolonial and pre-Islamic social control systems of *adats* (on the plural use of *adat*, see Hooker 1978)—that by definition are not Islamic.

I suggest that the here posited "Malayo-Javanic cultural and law area" emerged as a cultural complex among people of mixed genetic background inhabiting the region of the drowned Sundaland through convergence, diffusion and common inheritance perhaps around 2, 5 ka BC when the languages of Pre-WMP origin were replaced by WMP languages. This cultural complex has been influenced by Indicization in the first centuries AD. Based on the geographic distribution of WMP, its time depth, and the dispersal area, family resemblances in perceptions of right and wrong within such a WMP cultural complex would therefore most likely be organically grown out of 1) an pre-Austronesian (Asian

and Australoid? Or mixed?) linguistic and cultural substratum that might account for deep homologies and subsequent differentiation/localization, 2) the advent of WMP speakers that became culturally dominant, that might account for a second layer of homologies and subsequent processes of differentiation/localization and 3) Indic impact on languages, the introduction of Indic scripts, concepts of kingship and state, and geographic directional methods. However, this hypothesis may only be verified or falsified by the qualitative and quantitative reconstruction of Pre- and Proto-WMP language and culture based methods of historical linguistics, lexical reconstruction, archaeological in-depth analyses, and historical anthropology.

4. Malayo-Javanic Cultural Area

Here I posit the existence of a “Malayo-Javanic cultural area of family resemblances” that is comparable to what Sapir (1916, p. 15) described as a cultural complex and Josselin de Jong (1977, pp. 167–68) as “cultural area”. As I focus on the geographic area inhabited by speakers of the Malayo-Sumbawan and the Javanese subgroups (Adelaar 2005a, 2005b; Nothofer 1985), I exclude tangible and intangible culture from Taiwan, the Philippines and parts of Sulawesi. Further I tentatively include the Barito ethno-linguistic groups into the “Malayo-Javanic cultural area”. As to how far a) convergence, or independent invention, b) diffusion (historical contact, with borrowing), or c) common inheritance (lineal transmission from a common cultural antecedent, see Blust 1981, p. 286) in legal culture exist in these regions remains open to further linguistic, archaeological, genetic, and ethno-historiographical comparisons.

In reconstructing a segment of a common WMP cultural region and/or Malayo-Javanic cultural complex, a first step is to indicate a tentative cultural area based on archaeological, linguistic, genetic, and ethnographic data within a clearly demarcated geographic area inhabited by populations speaking closely related languages and ideally showing some indicators of genetic familiarity. For example, Sumatra, Riau, parts of the Malaysian Peninsula, Sunda, Java, Bali, Lombok and parts of Borneo which are inhabited by speakers of WMP languages were

here hypothesized to constitute a Malayo-Javanic cultural and law area, even if the indicated region appears problematic from the perspective of linguistics, genetics and geographic migrations, and undeniably share intangible and tangible culture with Austro-Asiatic speakers, and speakers of WMP in the Philippines, Sulawesi and the remaining parts of Borneo. Since after the arrival of the speakers of WMP the historic substratum of pre-WMP has become integrated into an overlapping and crisscrossing WMP cultural complex, this complex does not necessarily have one single “cultural prototype”; it may have more prototypes, which were progressively accommodated into the variety of intangible (values, norms, ideas) and tangible (artefacts, iconography, material) culture of ethno-linguistic WMP groups. The WMP cultural region probably diversified into two cultural areas: the Malayo-Javanic area and the Philippines-Celebes area. We can observe trajectories of this ancestral complex(es) in the variety of *adat* law systems among traditional communities or on isolated islands (see Lansing et al. 2011; Holleman 1981).

Based on Adelaar’s (2005*b*, p. 17) genetic categorization of the WMP languages, and Nothofer’s (1985; 1986, p. 88) “substratum thesis” and categorization of the languages of the Sumatra group and the Northwest Sumatra/Barrier Islands group (which include Chamic, Acehnese, the Batak languages and Gayo in Northwest Sumatra, Minangkabau, Malay, Lampung, Rejang, and Nias, Mentawai, Sichule, Simalur, and Enggano off Sumatra’s west coast), I tentatively include those linguistic groups into the hypothesized Malayic-Javanic cultural group because of the occurrence of cultural contact and borrowings (Nothofer 1986, p. 89). This is suggested by the existence of several similar tangible and intangible cultural elements, despite their unclear status as isolates or nuclear groups in historical linguistics. Evidently, Proto-MP **salaq* “wrong, in error (of behavior); miss (a target); mistake, error, fault” is evenly distributed among the Malayo-Javanic cultural area and among the languages of the Barrier islands indicating a shared concept of “deviance”.

As we have obviously Australoid and Asian pre-Austronesian settlers (Nothofer 1986, pp. 89, 94 referring to Kähler 1940 and Mahdi 1988), for the time being I will ignore the unclear linguistic status of the Barrier Islands languages, and include those ethnic groups into the

“Malayo-Javanic cultural and law area”, as their culture and hence their legal conceptions might probably be a product of a migration from the Sumatran mainland spanning from different periods of contact with Sumatra and Malayic (Blench 2014).

In addition to Nothofers’ (1986) pre-Austronesian substratum, archaeological findings on maritime interaction spheres hint on a WMP cultural complex that naturally diversified into smaller areas during the course of history. Bulbeck (2008, pp. 36–38) identifies pre-4 ka BC and post-4 ka BC interaction spheres of widespread maritime travel and cultural exchange; however, he notes that “archaeological evidence for richly interconnected maritime networks [...] postdates 4 ka BC” (ibid., p. 42) and the stabilization of coastal environments. The “overlapping complexity of the interaction axes” (ibid., p. 44) does not support a single interaction sphere with linear and unidirectional migration from one location of ISEA to the other, or relentless migration from a single source. Rather, the pictures indicates specific structures within a complex network:

[...] including a far northern sphere (from Taiwan to northern Luzon), a Wallacean sphere from the Batanes to East Timor, a western sphere (including most of Sumatra, Java and Borneo), and a Java-Sulawesi sphere (linking the two previously mentioned spheres).

Bulbeck (2008, p. 44)

Around 2,5-4 ka BC, Bulbeck (ibid., p. 41; see Fig. 4, Fig. 5, Fig 6. 46–47) located striking archaeological evidence for a western interaction sphere throughout the Malayic-Javanic cultural area, where historic family resemblances of the here hypothesized “Malayo-Javanic cultural and law area” had emerged.

5. Law Families, *Adat* as Social Control and the Malayo-Javanic Law Area

Adat law is generally conceived as a type of social control. If a social group has established a social order, and thereby values, norms and rules, which basically classify what is right and what is wrong, then social control denotes the mechanism to uphold this social order within

a particular social space. Social space “is created by human interaction itself” (Black 1998, p. xx). “It is multidimensional, including vertical space (social stratification), horizontal space (social morphology), symbolic space (culture), corporate space (organization), and normative space (social control)” (Black 1998, p. xx). Black (1998, p. xiii) defines social conflict as a clash of right and wrong; “it occurs whenever someone engages in conduct that someone else defines as deviant or whenever someone subjects someone else to social control”. The type of social control that has legal consequences or sanctions employed by an authority (traditional or modern states) is called law. Social control, dispute resolution or conflict management, as handling of “right and wrong” (Black 1998, p. xxiii), constitutes a mechanism that is crucial to systemic survival by perpetuating social order and stratification in a given social group, maintaining systemic stability, and integrating change (*ibid.*). More narrowly, social control refers to any process by which people define and respond to deviant behaviour (*ibid.*, p. 21, fn 1).

The social groups in Maritime Southeast Asia and the Malaysian Pensinsular had ancient systems of social control, which today are termed “adat” and “*adat* law”. *Adat* itself represents in Arabic (*‘ada*) pre-Islamic customs or legal systems and traditional customary rules as distinct from *shari’a*, the law of the Muslims (see Bousquet and Lokhandwalla 2010, short comprehensive introduction see Brill 1987 s.v. *adat*). In the languages of the people of the “Malay Archipelago” (Brill 1987, p. 7) or Maritime Southeast Asia, *‘ada* is the generic term in use for “customs, practice, use and wont” (Brill 1987, p. 7). *‘Ada* describes therefore the diversity of local customary practices and tradition as observed by Muslim in Southeast Asia. But in spite of its Islamic subtext, most likely due to colonial influence, the usage of the term *adat* has been institutionalized into various non-Muslim communities throughout Maritime Southeast Asia.

In the [...] community [...], harmony is only secured if every one of the members observes the traditional customs [...]. An adat can never be neglected without misgivings for the community or the individual; unforeseen harmful results might ensue. [...] That section of legal consequences are associated, is now generally called [...] “Adat law”

[...]. [...] It is also applied to Non-Muslim peoples and extended to the whole area in which Indonesian law is in force. This includes in addition to the Dutch Indies, the Philippines, Formosa and Madagascar.

Brill (1987, p. 7)

Consequently, here *adat* refers to the “old ways” and *adat* law to the “old law of the lands”. That is to say, *adat* law as a system of social control refers to the diversity of local “norms, rules, interdictions, and injunctions that guide an individual’s conduct as a member of the community and the sanctions and forms of redress by which these norms and rules are upheld” (Sather 2004, p. 124).

The ethnic groups in the Malay Peninsula and Western ISEA had ancient social control systems or uncodified plural legal orders. Uncodified law refers to practices of social control that invoke sanctions by a traditional authority. The term *adat* law (*adatrecht*) was systematically used for the first time by Christiaan Hurgronje, Dutch colonial advisor on Islamic policy, and subsequently by Van Vollenhoven, Dutch legal scholar. They had recognized that the term *adat* was used throughout the Dutch Indies to describe an “entity united by morality, customs, traditions, and legal institutions” (Arizona and Cahyadi 2013, p. 46) even though the concept was not found on all the islands of ISEA. Hence they invented the term *adat* law to denote local types of social control on base of local terms. While the Arabic word [*‘ada*] was used in Javanese, Malay, Acehnese, Minahasan Malay, and Minangkabau, there has never been a fixed terminology. In Balinese, we find *dresta*, the Baduy speak of *pikukuh karuhun*, and the Karo Batak of *basa* or *bicara*.

Moreover, as it is a “wholly erroneous supposition that law follows religion” (Holleman 1981, p. 8), van Vollenhoven suggested an organically grown legal practice and stated that “Indonesian never (or hardly ever?) includes those elements of the religious laws which are not rooted in ‘the old law of the land’. These elements are distinguished from *adat* under such terms as *hukum agama* (Javanese; see Hoadley and Hooker 1981), *hukom* (Acehnese and Gayonese) and *hukum agama* (Southern Sumatra)” (Holleman 1981, p. 4). It is important to note, therefore, as Sather (2004, p. 124) remarked that “among Muslim societies in Southeast Asia, the concept of *adat* is generally distinguished

from *ugama*' religion (which is separately concerned with the rules of religious observance) and from Islamic law. For most non-Muslim groups, this distinction between *adat* and religion is not recognized".

In 1893, Snouck Hurgronje made a distinction between Islamic law and *adat* law ("custom that has legal consequences", Hollemann 1981, p. xliii), as distinct from *adat* or mere custom (ibid., p. 5). Legal consequences denote rules that carry enforceable sanctions and necessitate a traditional authority with the political and judicial legitimation to enforce rules and carry out sanctions. Enforceable sanctions refer to human punishment, "or the human power to make something *pantang*, forbidden" (ibid., p. xliii). Different types of headmen, village tribunals, and courtly judges would carry out sanctions as legal consequences or sanctions for deviance and forbidden conduct. Hollemann (ibid., p. xliii) tells us that van Vollenhoven employed the term *adat* law because "the term did not imply a rigid division between matters of law and other *adat*". However, "difficulties and confusion arise, when certain conduct is prohibited as likely to provoke the wrath of the gods or spirits (*pantang, rebu, pemali*), but its violation is punished by humans as well" (ibid., p. xliii). Clifford Sather (2004., p. 124) captures *adat* as follows:

[...] the prime function of *adat* is to ensure harmonious relations among community members. At the same time, conduct in accordance with *adat* is believed to maintain the community in a state of ritual well-being in respect to the gods, ancestors, and spirits. The correct observance of *adat* is thought to result in a continuing state of spiritual well-being, demonstrated outwardly by the health, longevity, and material prosperity of community members. In this sense, the meaning of the word is not restricted to customary law but rather applies to the entire normative framework of traditional social and religious life.

Here I use *adat* as a shorthand reference for an analytical category thought not to represent "traditional religion" (Blench 2012) but the trajectory of a normative framework of sociocultural and economic life that would have characterized WMP civilization. Thus, *adat* law and systems of local knowledge (*kearifan lokal* in contemporary Indonesia and Malaysia) would form the remains of that civilization. I am aware

that my understanding is innovative as *adat* is usually understood as “customs, practice, use and wont” (Brill 1987, p. 7). Further, I understand *adat* law as a generic term applied to denote the local systems of social control throughout the Malaysian Peninsular (including present day South Thailand) and maritime Southeast Asia (modern Indonesia, Brunei, Malaysia, and South Philippines). Due to its history and geographic expansion, *adat* law is in itself plural; however, although the local systems of social control differ locally and regionally in their body of rules, we might still try to map out boundaries where their basic mechanisms of dispute or conflict resolution and sanctioning appear to be similar or different.

Van Vollenhoven (Holleman 1981, p. 2) indicated that in pre-history, the islands of the archipelago only knew uncoded law. Its “jural communities” were larger or smaller “constituent corporate units of an organized indigenous society” (ibid., p. 43), which derived “their distinct, legal autonomy in domestic affairs from the fact that each has a) its discrete representative authority, and b) its discrete communal property, especially land, over which it exercises control” (ibid.)—that is, politico-legal authority over their ancestral domain. In other words, common origin (genealogy), a representative authority and a shared territory are the key aspects that unite and characterize an *adat* community. Such *adat* communities vary according to the way they combine the genealogical, political and territorial aspects. Van Vollenhoven (ibid., p. xlv) pointed to land rights—and until today indigenous land rights remains a highly sensitive issue—as to be “religiously rooted and to reflect the fundamental connexion of a human group to the deities and spirits of the land it inhabits”. These pre-colonial systems of social control incorporated to varying degrees Hindu and Islamic legal concepts and mechanisms. Before the introduction of Indian script, dated to fifth or early sixth century AD in South Kalimantan, sixth or early seventh century AD in West Java, and in the early eighth century in Central Java, one is inclined to assume with van Vollenhoven (ibid., p. 2) that “only the indigenous law of the Malayo-Polynesians was found [...]”. Foreign contributions, that is Hindu (ca. fifth century), Muslim (ca. ninth century), Chinese (ca. twelve century), have been worked into that law. “But, with that all, the total law of the archipelago

remained uncoded. [...] It was only when the Europeans appeared on the scene and assumed power from the sixteenth century onwards that western regulations began to replace or supplement the uncoded law [...]" (ibid., p. 2).

The law of the Malayo-Polynesians or the local politico-legal orders incorporated traditions of Indian, Sinic, or Islamic legal thought during the course of history. Based on prevalent prehistoric legal systems, Hindu legal thought enriched and sophisticated the pre-existent models, which have later been reformed by Islam (see Brill 1987); yet, the primary mechanisms of social sanctions, compensation, and mediation seem to have been conservative and continued throughout all three stages of organic legal development in the "Malayo-Javanic law area" (see Landmann and Fathurrokmān 2012, 2013). Van Vollenhoven (ibid., p. 8) remarked that "anyone wishing to investigate the *adat* law of the present day or that of centuries ago, will, like the philologist or ethnologist, have to be prepared to strike deposits of foreign origin". He (ibid.) also underlined that "linguistic usage distinguished between original and foreign elements of *adat* law by placing the *adat* of the ancestors on one side [...] and parts of the religious law on the other". He therefore ascribed a secondary position to the religious laws (ibid., p. 11), with the exception of identity politics, when religion influenced *adat* as in the case of a Dayak who embraces Islam and who "will be accepted as a Malay by the Moslem Malays" (ibid., p. 22).

Hence legal plurality of jural communities and the indigenous seed of legal pluralism coexisted during pre-colonial times. In this context, it seems that the Indianized or Islamic court elites "(...) were, to a large degree, legally divorced from the populations amongst whom they existed" (Hooker 1978, p. 9; see also Hollemann 1981, p. 37), because court tribunals and village tribunals each had a distinctive domain of jurisdiction (Tambiah 1976; see also Hollemann 1981, p. 37). As archipelagic traditions and practices were regarded as the origin of ancestral tradition by the Hindu-Buddhist or Islamic court elites, local identity continued to emerge out of the local jural communities bound by local collegial-consensus legal orders followed in specific villages or groups of villages. In consequence, local communities and early polities had already established both 1) *adat* and *adat* law or plural systems

of socio-politico-legal orders and 2) a dual legal order with distinctive spheres of jurisdiction. The hierarchical system of the central court in which the sovereigns and their royal judges had a certain jurisdiction based on court edicts, Hindu law, or rules of the Islamic law-schools, whereas the pluriform collegial-consensus legal orders at the villages also had a specific sphere of jurisdiction limited to the domain or territory of the village.

After having established a WMP cultural region/complex and a Malayo-Javanic cultural area, let us now turn to law families that could be derived from language groupings. In the 1910s and 1920s, C. van Vollenhoven (Holleman 1981, p. 33) promoted a comparative ethnological study of legal systems as a method for studying law. In linguistics and the comparative study of religion, six groupings are recognized: the Indo-Germanic, Semitic, and Malayo-Polynesian languages; and Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Teutonic religions. With regard to the study of what he terms “the indigenous law of the Malayo-Polynesians” (ibid., p. 2), he remarks:

Who will indicate what these law groups are and determine this ‘plan of selected areas’? There will be little objection to taking the language groups as a starting point, although language groupings, ethnic groupings, and law groupings certainly need not coincide.

(Ibid., p. 34)

Van Vollenhovern identified the “*adat* law of Russia, of central Asia, of China, India, northwest Africa (the Maghrib), central Africa, and of the Red Indians etc., alongside that of our archipelago” as distinctive law groups, and advocated the following:

With regard to each of these laws regions, an effort should be made not only to examine the state of *adat* law, but also its historical growth and the nature for its distribution. Each *law region*, (e.g.) our archipelago should be divided into a number of *law areas* (e.g. southern Sumatra, Bali plus Lombok) and most of these law areas into *law districts* – each with its district law or law dialects.

(Ibid., p. 34)

Continuing van Vollenhovern’s discovery of a “Malayo-Polynesian law family” in the 1910s and Blust’s (1981) linguistic reconstructions for

particular taboos in early Austronesian society (PAN **pali*, PMP taboo, **busung*, (PMP “incur supernatural punishment”), I shall outline my working hypothesis of a WMP law region. I suggest that this WMP law region might be at least composed of two law areas:

- 1) A Malayo-Javanic law area with its “law-districts” located on the islands of Western Indonesia and parts of Malaysia;
- 2) A Philippines-Celebes law area with its “law-districts”.

I hypothesize the existence of an WMP cultural and law region, distributed over Sumatra, the Barrier Islands, Bangka-Belitung, Riau, parts of the Malaysian Peninsular, Java, Madura, Bali, Lombok, West-Sumbawa, parts of Borneo, parts of Indochina that have—with the exception of Lombok and Sumbawa—been connected in the continent Sundaland before the sea levels rose. Van Vollenhoven (*ibid.*, p. 44) divided the Indies into nineteen law areas (I speak of districts here) of which I include ten into my hypothesis of a Malayo-Javanic law area: 1) Aceh, 2) the Gayo, Alas, Bataklands, 3) Minangkabau [hence also Negeri Sembilan in Malaysia], 4) South Sumatra, 5) the Malay territory with Riau and Lingga, 6) Bangka and Belitung, 16) Bali and Lombok, 17) Central and East Java, 18) the central Javanese Principalities, 19) West Java.

The south-western, southern and south-eastern parts of Borneo are part of the Malayo-Javanic law area, whereas the remaining parts of Borneo would belong to the Philippines-Celebes law area. Following tentative parts of Central and Northern Borneo would belong to the area, pointed at the following law areas: parts of Borneo, the Minahasa, Gorontalo, South Celebes, Toraja, and Ternate (*ibid.*, p. 44). The Malayo-Javanic law area shows striking similarities in its socio-political organization—its “jural communities”—, the law of communal lands (or ancestral domains), the law of wrongs, or how deviance is handled, and legal procedures and sanctions. Until today, we may observe legal pluralism—a discrimination between court/state law—and “village justice” or plural informal law systems throughout the region (see Landmann and Fathurrokman 2012). This discrimination has deep historical roots and we find it in the division between the law of the royal courts and the villages. As argued by Hollemann (1981, p. 37),

“it should always be remembered that the adat law of the population need certainly not be the same as that of their overlords”. Thus, this might be a remaining feature of the “house societies” in Western Indonesia.

The currently still opaque Philippines-Celebes law area appears to be correlated with a tendency towards headhunting, slave taking, feuding, and raiding, and seems to be based on lineage—that is, family or clan relations. It is less territory-bound than the “Malayo-Javanic law area”, where amicable settlements, therapeutic mechanisms, arbitration and social sanctions as ostracism, or denial of communal support as well as such avoidance strategies as “magic” prevail, and justice relies on mediators or informal village tribunals that express “the spirit of give and take, on mediation, and conciliation” (Hollemann 1981, p. lxiii; see Landmann and Fathurrokman 2012, 2013 for the basic working mechanism of Malayo-Javanic social control mechanisms). In how far those mechanisms of social control are related to basic subsistence strategies has not yet been comparatively discussed. There are few studies in this area, i.e. that on rice cultivation in ancient Java by van Setten van der Meer (1979), and, those on the co-evolution of agricultural and sociopolitical systems in Bali by Lansing (1987, 1991).

Van Vollenhoven found, as Landmann and Fathurrokman (2012, 2013) almost a century later, that individuals obey to “*adat* law not because of the threat of judicial force—but because compliance has become a habit, because the fear their ancestors, because violation would not serve their interests, and finally because of the force of oral tradition” (Hollemann 1981, p. xlv). Additionally, practices of Indonesian headmen and others give “guidance in the observance of *adat*, of taking it under their care and supervision, without there being any question as yet of the resolution of disputes or of action to enforce law” (ibid., p. xlv). In contemporary terms, this refers to the therapeutic style of social control. Moreover, “the action of Indonesian *adat*-judges when they do adjudicate in dispute, is characterized by mediation, accommodation and reconciliation of conflicting individual and communal interests” (ibid., p. xlv). In contemporary terms, we speak of restorative justice and alternative dispute resolution (see Landmann and Fathurrokman 2012, 2013).

Attested observance of the law by headmen and other socially prominent figures, and the accommodation of character of indigenous justice – ‘a hundred times more effective than adjudication’ – are natural because these notables are seen as part of the cosmic order of society. They act and speak as those whose duty is to ‘see that the wishes of the ancestors are observed and to act as their earthly representatives’ (Hollemann 1981, p. xliv; see Landmann and Fathurrokman 2012, 2013 on the function of Baduy headman and spiritual leaders, also Tooker 1996).

Adat law or local socio-politico-legal orders are characterized by complexity. Perceived from a local perspective, “the idea of proper behaviour in one’s relations both with other people and with natural phenomena” (Hooker 1978, p. 50) is crucial to a comprehensive understanding of *adat* law, and many *adat* law rules may not strike the Western researcher as “law”. Because *adat* law is perceived as involving an uncontrollable, “non-empiric” (Hooker 1978) dimension (that of the divine, the ancestors, and spirits of nature), *adat* law is actually more than just a set of rules. *Adats* contain a differentiation between empiric-scientific and non-empiric or pre-scientific or habitual knowledge, but also a differentiation between what we can perceive as human: an empiric and a non-empiric world. As stated earlier, remains of the WMP civilization are to be found in *adat* law and systems of local knowledge. Despite a certain degree of conservatism and resilience, *adat* law is a dynamic system of knowledge; it provides flexibility to actualize and negotiate changes in time and space. In fact, naming local or autochthonous knowledge “traditional” seems irreverent, because those preserving it think of their knowledge as the law of nature. It does not resemble “the so called survival of the fittest law made popular by Charles Darwin, but a law that was handed down from the gods and mythic heroes” (Cowen 1993, p. 5). To Cowen, “there is a celestial underpinning of traditional law that brooks neither amendment nor change”, as “each set of laws governed the conduct of men in their everyday activities as well as in their relationship with the invisible world of nature”.

In the realm of *adats* and local knowledge, we deal with an anthropocentric world comprised of quadripartite relations—a world where the human communicate and maintain close contacts with supernatural

beings, their group, and nature. A salient feature of the WMP civilization conserved in *adats* may therefore be the concept of an eco-social-spiritual kinship between nature, spirits of nature and humanity, and ancestors or a higher reality. *Adats* denote a comprehensive way of life pertaining to interactions and relationships between four domains:

1. the transcendent dimension of the divine and ancestors,
2. the dimension of humans,
3. the dimension of a non-empirical world (Hooker 1978) and non-empirical creatures (spirits of nature),
4. the dimension of nature.

Hence *adats* exhibit kinship relations between humans and nature. In creation myths, nature and its animating spirits often were created before or together with humans and hence they are considered to be siblings. Usually humans need to ask permission before they interact with nature (clearing forest, planting etc). Therefore, a strong connection between social group, social control (relations based), and environmental management is prevalent in local legal systems. This strong relation between communal lands and the community led van Vollenhoven to the above discussed term “jural communities” that are bound together by a political and juridical authority and the domain they permanently inhabit.

The ancestral WMP and Malayo-Javanic cultural area is today best observed in small *adat* communities, and amongst other possible definitions, *adats* indeed may be understood as the trajectories of a WMP integral worldview or civilization expressing kinship between creator beings, ancestors, humans, entire systems of different species of benevolent and malevolent spirits, and nature—mostly perceived as mother earth. *Adats* tend to form total conceptual orders where spatial, material, social, and cosmological notions are encompassed under unifying dualistic schemata that are traditionally transmitted by myth, legends, and stories. In consequence, values, norms, rules and mechanisms contained within Indonesian *adats* of traditional communities may constitute contemporary representations of trajectories of an ancestral WMP civilization associated with eco-social-spiritual kinship relations that connect the ethnographic present to the prehistoric past—a past that shaped a consciousness of worlds beyond the local.

6. A Religion of the Mother?

An important question concerns the problem as to why MP languages replaced nearly all of the pre-existing languages in ISEA. Several authors mention a cultural advantage, pointing to particular social mechanisms or to a cultural dominance of the speakers of MP during the Neolithic. Bulbeck (2008, p. 48) relates this advantage to an advanced maritime capacity that allowed for traffic of human experiences and trade. The post 4,000 BP maritime network was so pervasive and “so advantaged were those who operated it or at least connected to it, that, by ethnographic times, the vast majority of the languages of ISEA, whether spoken by ‘Mongoloids’ [Tao, AL] or ‘Negritos’ [Qata, AL], were Malayo-Polynesian”. Blench (2012, p. 126) interprets this advantage as a process of “Austronesianisation” of ISEA—“a process whereby Austroasiatic, Papuan, and other unknown languages were brought into the Austronesian fold”. The question is now, which mechanisms could bring forth such a process? As the migration of a farming complex had most likely nothing to do with it, the process rather centred around the traffic of values, ideas (hence also cultural and legal properties), valuable goods (including fauna and animals) and technology (see Spriggs 2003, p. 106; Bulbeck 2008, p. 44). Blench mentions that language levelling—the process, “when the spread of a major language, usually among languages which are already related, causes lexical and grammatical convergence” as “consequence of centralized political authority”—could be a reason for the adoption of MP languages (ibid., p. 132). However, if there is “evidence for extensive language levelling in islands where there is no clear evidence for the sort of political process that reduced Java to a single language” (ibid., p. 132), how could we imagine such a process, or cultural advantage? Blench (ibid., p. 122) assumes that “the spread of Austronesian languages was due to a powerful religious/lifestyle ideology which assimilated indigenous speech communities and that this can be detected from material culture”.

In this context, Bulbeck (2008, p. 43) describes the Austronesian painting tradition as “featuring hand stencils, abstract designs, and anthropomorphs evidently engaged in rites or travelling in boats, painted on high cliffs overlooking the sea”. Likewise, Blench (2012, pp. 128–29)

identifies iconography as a pervasive marker of a Malayo-Polynesian cultural grammar; he refers to 1) the *bulul* figure which is dispersed from the northern Philippines to Vietnam, Indonesia and western Melanesia, and 2) the split figure distributed from Vietnam, to the Philippines, and the Austral Islands. Blench (2012, p. 129) argues that “it is extremely rare for iconographic elements to be conserved over such an extensive geographic and temporal range”. Blench (2012, p. 138) proposes that religion and lifestyle expressed in the pervasive religious iconography of the MP-speaking fisher-forager-raider-traders who had access to innovative maritime technology were the primary engine of cultural conversion. He (*ibid.*, p. 129) compares the MP iconography to the spread of Catholic iconography over the globe:

Despite a slight trend towards local features, the core images are essentially the same. If the Austronesian situation is comparable then this pervasive imagery is a manifestation of *adat*, the traditional religion of ISEA prior to the spread of the world religions.

Glover and Bellina (2011, p. 22) make a similar point referring to intra-regional exchange networks during the SEA Bronze Age. As a result of the demands and contacts generated, MSEA and ISEA societies involved in these exchange networks underwent internal social restructuring. They suggest a first common symbolic system for the prehistoric period based on artefacts that were shared by groups in Thailand, of the Sa Huynh culture, and Palawan in the Philippines: “since the late pre-historic period, a set of social groups in different and mutually distant Southeast Asian localities involved in exchange might have established a common symbolic system” (*ibid.*). It might be therefore reasonable to assume that Glover and Bellina’s symbolic system and Blench’s Austronesian religious ideology, hinted at by Bulbeck (2008) and Spriggs (2012) as well, indicate the first scientifically detectable religious systems in the region.

Lansing et al. (2011, pp. 253, 265, referring to Cox et al. 2010) found that the paternal gene pool is sharply subdivided between Western and Eastern Indonesia, with a boundary running along Wallace’s phenotypic line between the islands of Bali/Sumbawa and Flores. Spriggs (2012) assumed that this Wallace’s phenotypic line could mark the border

between two expanding mid-Holocene cultural and economic systems, one Papuan-speaking and patrilocal, the other Austronesian and matrilineal. In addition to technology, trade, adaptive subsistence pattern, and religion, Jordan et al. (2009) and Lansing et al. (2011) suggest matrilineality as another explanation for a gradual Austronesianization of ISEA and the adoption of Austronesian languages, which could be integrated into Blench's hypothesis of an advanced religion leading to cultural dominance. In my opinion, cultural and language shift may have been promoted by the combination of matrilineality (Jordan et al. 2009; Lansing et al. 2011) and faith/lifestyle (Glover and Bellina 2011; Blench 2012) within early "house societies" (Lansing et al. 2011 referring to Lévi-Strauss 1983). A short discussion of this expression may be found in González-Ruibal (2006).

Jordan et al. (2009, p. 1957) found that matrilineality was predominant in early Austronesian societies ~ 4.5–5 ka BC. Matrilineality is found at the root of the Austronesian language family; hence, all Austronesian societies have a "matricentric orientation" (ibid., p. 1957); that is, a theme of matrilineal descent and matrilineal kinship structures (ibid., p. 1957). Terms related to matrilineality are found among 99 per cent of the MP languages; moreover, in MP social groups, matrilineality, patrilineality, and ambilineality can belong to one structure. Lévi-Strauss (1969 in Fox 2006a, p. 6) termed such a structure a "house society", and contrasted it with rigid kinship-based social systems, as "houses need to form and retain alliances and to commemorate their origins [...] it is absolutely immaterial whether the principle of genealogical grouping is matrilineal or patrilineal" (Lansing et al. 2011, p. 266 referring to Lévi-Strauss 1983). Lansing et al. (2011, p. 266) remarked "the house is regarded as the ancestral embodiment of the group it represents, engaged in marital and affinal alliances with other houses". Apparently, Lévi-Strauss considered the "non-unilineal" forms of social organizations in Polynesia, Indonesia, Melanesia as belonging to "house societies", as houses constitute a key symbolic element in those societies and are the focus of all activities, especially of rituals and sacrifices. House societies refer to a form of social organization that are characterized by:

their possession of a ‘domain’ consisting of both material and immaterial wealth or honors; the extensive use of fictive kinship in alliance and adoption; and the transmission of the ‘domain’—titles, prerogatives, and wealth—via women as well as men (ibid., p. 6; Lansing et al. 2011., p. 263 referring to Lévi-Strauss 1983).

According to Lansing et al. (2011, p. 267), the Austronesian expansion began with the spread of matrilineal Neolithic house societies into ISEA, which was already populated by foragers-hunters. In Western Indonesia, these foragers-hunters were Asian/*Tao*, whereas in Eastern Indonesia, they were Australoid/*Qata* (see Hill et al. 2007 and Soares et al. 2011). As MP-speaking groups advanced, the initial population of both Australoid/Asian and MP groups was most likely small. Due to climatic stability, all matrilineal MP settlements underwent a Neolithic population expansion. As a result, MP women occasionally married men from surrounding non-MP villages, who then lived with the wife’s kin.

Consequently, as I infer, the children of these marriages would have been educated in their mother’s kin religion, and spoken their mother’s language, and thereby the total population of MP speakers and faith communities grew. Lansing (ibid., pp. 266, 269–70) describes that given sufficient time, this process would eventually lead to the replacement of non-Austronesian languages—and as I infer, that this process would logically lead to highly localized hybrid cultures as described by Blench for the Dayak and Aslian speaker of Borneo and Malaysia. The smaller the indigenous population at the time of Austronesian colonization, the faster this would occur. Thereby, matri-biased social organization in Oceania restricted female genetic diversity and increased male diversity as non-MP men married in (see Jordan et al. 2009; Lansing et al. 2011). Lansing’s model shows a “butterfly effect”: “over a time scale of tens of generations a seemingly trivial shift in marriage preferences can produce a seismic change in language, culture and demography [...] this transformative potential was realized in the wake of the Austronesian colonization of ISEA” (Lansing et al. 2011, p. 271). Perhaps, matrilocality and the MP religion/lifestyle combined in the “mother’s religion” conveyed at the house communities constituted the advantage, which led to cultural dominance or “Austronesianization” of ISEA, Near and Remote Oceania. This cultural dominance was also

supported by highly adaptive subsistence strategies, trade of valuable goods, and elaborate maritime technologies.

Lansing et al. (2011, p. 269) state that “[t]he current eastward limit of rice is to the east of Wallace’s line, which also marks the sharp subdivision in the human gene pool between Western and Eastern Indonesia”. Their model explains “this break by the disappearance of house societies in lowland regions in the western islands, where irrigated rice cultivation triggered a population explosion and also brought population movement to a standstill” (ibid., p. 270). In their view, the development of wet rice agriculture in Java and Bali around the sixth century led to the dissolution and/or transformation (see Reuter 2006) of house societies as “a consequence of three demographic processes: a shift to endogamous marriage, population growth, and reduced mobility” (Lansing et al. 2011, p. 269) that were concentrated in the regions where irrigated rice could be grown, and lineage-based kingship developed, further:

House societies vanished from the lowlands, where endogamous farming communities grew up along the rivers and irrigation canals. In Bali, these communities adapted to population growth by creating new settlements downstream (Lansing et al., 2008b; Lansing et al., 2009). The effect of these changes was to bring large-scale (inter-island) population movement to a standstill, and to magnify existing genetic differences on either side of Wallace’s phenotypic line.

Hence patrilocality might have developed around 2000–500 BC together with the introduction of dry and later wet paddy economies that made permanent settlement necessary and triggered the emergence of villages, domains and later lineage-based Hindu polities. The need to cooperate and mutual dependence in those agricultural economies might have spurred initially the territorial systems of social control today observed in the Malayo-Javanic cultural area that rather based on mechanisms of social sanctions and therapy than on punishment. Lansing et al. (2011, p. 269) suggest that irrigated rice agriculture triggered the dissolution and/or transformation (see Reuter 2006) of the house societies, because house societies are not found today in the lineage-based rice-growing areas of Java and Bali (I would also include Sumatra, Lombok and parts of Borneo). Remarkably, they note that on those islands there are

highland regions inhabited by upland communities that do not grow irrigated rice, which retain more social and cultural attributes of traditional Austronesian house societies than the lowland rice-growing villages. We still find exceptions in upland Bali (see Reuter 2002, 2006): the *banua* refers to alliances of villages in the Balinese Highlands near Kintamani, as well as among the Tenggere, Ammatoa and the Baduy. And, I add, we find traces of revered female founding ancestors in Trunyan and Tenganan communities, thought of as Balinese aborigines (Landmann, fieldnotes). Most likely prehistoric house societies were transformed over time as the agricultural overlapping social groups based on territory—as *banjar* and *subak* systems in Bali—and descent—as family and village temples—reflect similar properties as the house societies (see Schoenfelder 2000 and Reuter 2003, 2006).

Comparative linguistics provides evidence for the type of social organization and social control in early Austronesian societies. For the oldest linguistic stages, Blust reconstructed Proto-AN **rumaq* (house) as a descent group, and PMP **datu* (after Dempwolff) as a term for a political-spiritual office. Fox (2006a, p. 2) stated that the category of “house” may be used abstractly to distinguish social groups of varying sizes. As houses may define various social groups, which are not necessarily the same as the house’s residential group, hence the “house” is a fundamental cultural category. Thomas Reuter (2006, p. 73) remarked that “(m)any societies in the Austronesian-speaking world show patterns of regional and local organisation wherein a category of ‘place’—the kingdom, domain, village or house—serves as a key idiom of social identity in its own right, though often also in combination with a notion of common ancestry or ‘name’”.

In the Malayo-Javanic cultural area, we find 5 out of 5 lexically reconstructed forms of these various house terms: 1) AN **Rumaq*, 2) PMP **balay*, 3) PMP **lepaw* (ambiguous for Malayo-Javanic), 4) PMP **kalamiR*, 5) PMP **banua* (see Reuter 2003, 2006 for detailed discussion). According to Fox (2006a, p. 12) these house terms suggests that the WMP groups retain more of the earlier traditions of the house, whereas these traditions among CEMP speakers were transformed. Of particular interest is Proto-MP **banua*/**panua*, glossed as house or inhabited territory, homeland, community, and land-owning kin group

(Blust 2013, p. 346, ACD) or land, country, place, settlement, inhabited territory, village (Fox 2006a, p. 12). Most likely the glosses of this term reflect back on the transformation from house societies to lineage based organization as Proto-MP **banua* defines social groups, their domain and connects them to the past emphasizing origins and founder rank (see Reuter 2006). The term is widely distributed among the Malayo-Javanic cultural area and has reflexes in the Barrier islands with Mentawai being a lexical exception. With regard to the overlapping ritual order of a domain in Balinese highlands (*banua*), Thomas Reuter (2006, p. 73) argued:

what we are dealing with here is not a simple kinship system nor a complex one, but a Lévi-Straussian house society in a ritualised modality (see Reuter 2002b). The organising principle is a sequence of inhabited places represented symbolically by sacred ancestor houses or ‘temples’. These sacred houses are ranked in order of their foundation. In short, the contemporary order of ritual obligations maps and retraces a path of origin through a socio-historically inscribed landscape.

Fox (2006a, p. 15) observes that “[t]he definition of ‘inside’ is a relative notion within traditional Austronesian houses. Although ‘inside’ may include everything beneath the roof, more often the category of ‘inside’ (Proto-Austronesian, **dalem*) is specifically defined”. Proto-AN **dalem*⁴

⁴ Ibid., available at <http://www.trussel2.com/acd/acd-s_d.htm#7088>. 1) Malay – *dalam*, palace, prince’s home; inside, inner, used as a locative (*di dalam* “in”, *dari dalam* “from within”); inner, as the inner part or central room of a house; depth; deep, profound; 2) Old Javanese – *dalem*, inner part, interior; inner part of the kraton (palace); Javanese – *dalem*, inside of, within; the inner rooms of a house; house, home; walled-in residence compound of an aristocratic family; Sundanese – *dalem*, title and dwelling of a regent, *pa-dalem-an*, dwelling of a prince, palace; Balinese – *dalem*, deep, as the sea; the deep (sea); respect, regard; king; Sasak – *dalem*, depth, innermost part; deep, within. Interestingly, Fox (2006a, p. 16) already remarked that *dalem* is “house” (*omah*) in the highest Javanese speech register; but it may refer in a lower register, “to the inner family room(s) of an ordinary house or to the inner precinct of a palace, which is not considered to be the place of the ruler but rather the most private abode of the women of the palace. Some Javanese see this *dalem* as the sacred resort of a female goddess”. In Bali, *dalem* often refers to a king, or the royal residence, but in pura *dalem*, which means temple of the deceased, *dalem* refers to the Hindu goddess Durgā, who dwells in the cemetery next to the temple and in the temple.

appears to have been “inside, area within, inner part of something” (ACD). Throughout the Malayo-Javanic cultural area, the term is associated with the inner part of a royal compound; this reminds us of the *abdi dalem*, the courtier of Javanese and Balinese royal courts. The glosses of **dalem* within Malayo-Sumbawan and Javanese demonstrate a specific geographic transformation of the definition of “place” and hence support the notion of a Malayo-Javanic law area. Reuter (2006, p. 65) described the process as follows:

Indeed, the distinctions house-village, village-domain, and domain-kingdom are all more or less fluid [...]. In part, this conceptual similarity and fluidity is a reflection of historical processes. A house with a cluster of branch houses could grow into a village, which in turn could acquire branch villages and grow into a domain, which could—alone or in conjunction with other, allied domains—become the ritual foundation for the formation of a Hindu polity.

The proto-forms of the discussed house terms support the Malayo-Javanic cultural area, but are inconclusive for the mapping of boundaries of a law area as they are found in the Philippines, Borneo and Sulawesi. The wide distribution and identical glossing of **banua* in the Malayo-Javanic cultural area, however, hints to the interlinking of common ancestry, political representation and the inhabited domain as a shared sociocultural concept. Particularly interesting is the reference to “inner” and “inner area” as related to a socially higher status (king, royal residence, and respect) in Malay, Old Javanese, Sundanese, Balinese and Sasak, which appears to be a later innovation related to contact with Indicized cultural concepts, the development of complex social stratification systems based on increasingly hereditary ranks that extended clan based or tribal relations and ascribed status systems, and the development of economies based on wet rice agriculture.

The idea of origin, as houses and later domains and Hindu polities in the pre-Islamic Malayo-Javanic cultural area are associated with PAN **pun* “trunks” and “origin”, founder events and elaborate ritual activities. Fox (2006a, pp. 6, 36) stated that besides PMP “**puqun*, reflexes of **t-u(m)pu* (or **epu*), ‘ancestor, master, second generation relative’, and **tu(m)buq*, ‘growth’, figure prominently in metaphoric statements about

origins". PMP **puqun* is glossed as "base of a tree; cause; source, origin; beginning; foot of a hill or mountain; first wife; model or example (to be copied); expression for the mother's brother". Reuter's (2006, p. 73) research in Balinese highlands showed that the depth of ancestral origin and migration connections in a domain usually amounts to only two layers (origin and branch), in this context Fox (2006a, p. 17) states that:

One category for designating 'origin' refers to the 'base' or 'trunk' of a tree thus connoting and conflating ideas of 'base', 'trunk', 'cause', 'beginning', 'source' and 'origin'. The idea of origin is thus conceived of, in a botanic idiom, as a kind of epistemic development from a 'base' to a 'tip' or, more divergently, to a myriad of separate 'tips' (Fox 1971). Houses, by the nature of their construction, lend themselves to the expression of this botanic metaphor of origin.

Fox (2006c, p. 6) pointed out that "[t]he metaphoric linkage of 'origin' and 'cause' with the 'base', 'trunk' or '(tap)-root' of a tree and the implied sense of growth that derives from this botanic idiom may also be applied to life in general and to social life in particular" (see Reuter 2006, pp. 6–7 on the temple system in highland Bali). Fox notes that other equivalent terms are among the Karo Batak *benakayu*; among the Minangkabau, *pangkalan*; among the Javanese and Balinese, *wit* (*kawitan*). Among the Baduy, *puun* is the title for the spiritual leader associated with origin and fertility (see Landmann and Fathurrokman 2012, 2013).

In his comparative analysis of WMP "two-axis" relative orientation systems in western Indonesia and Madagascar, Adelaar (1997, p. 53) stated that "[t]he fundamental axis of orientation in Austronesian societies is the inland versus the sea" and directional systems depend on the relative position of the sea and the interior (mountains). The WMP systems have one relative axis (to the mountain/sea, landward/seaward or upstream/downstream), and another axis may be aligned to the rising and setting sun. These relative spatial directions are associated with sociocultural qualities as outer and inner, male and female, helpful and dangerous. Reflexes of this two-axis system are found throughout the WMP cultural region, namely in Sumatra (Aceh),

Sunda, Madura, Central and East Java, Bali, Lombok, Madagascar, Borneo, and among the speakers of Malay and Chamic languages. Most indigenous two-axis systems were doubled during the course of history to create four-axis systems and developed into cardinal geographical systems with a fixed north, east, south and west axes “for some specific [...] usage, and they were often borrowed from another culture” (ibid., p. 54). Most likely, this doublings were the result of Malay and/or Indian influence—the Malay cardinal systems would be used for maritime navigation whereas the Indian cardinal system would apply to social and ritual qualities as well. These two-axis and four-axis systems have a strong impact on space orientation and cosmological, political as well as sociocultural ordering.

In conclusion, historic houses (and later villages, domains and Hindu polities) are ordered social structures oriented according to directional axes (right/left of river, mountain/sea, north/south, sunrise/sunset, upstream/downstream) that are given gender associations as male and female, low and high social status or pure and polluted. It would also appear that the connection between origin, land, and kinship groups and the kinship between human and land/nature is crucial to WMP social groups, and consequentially also to the Malayo-Javanic cultural region and its prevalent systems of social control.

Blust (ACD) glosses the term **datu* as “lineage priest (?)”: most likely, *datu* referred to ascribed and achieved authority. Reflexes of the term *datu* (political leader or lineage priest) suggest a form of authority, and a connection between political rank ritual status and spatial alignment (see Tooker 1996). With regard to the political office, **Datu* has four possible meanings: 1) political leader, chief; 2) priest, custodian and administrator of customary law, medical practitioner (hence religious, legal and medical authority = traditional scholar); 3) aristocrat, noble; and 4) ancestor, grandfather, elder (Scaglione 1996, p. 6). The glosses of *datu* in the Malayo-Javanic cultural and law area range from ancestor, shaman, medical practitioner, head of a kin group and guardian of traditional law, head of village federations, to chief, prince, king, and princess having thus connotations with the indigenous, Indic and Islamic political office (see Blust 2010). In this context it is important to note, that in MSEA and ISEA (see Dentan this volume) the prehistoric concept

of socio-political power appears to have been differentiated into two dimensions (see Tooker 1996). In modern terms, the political office comprised legal-political and religious-spiritual functions:

- 1) potency (fertility/procreation): functionaries (e.g., shaman, priest, *balian*, medium) and places/objects responsible for the channelling and infusion of potency into the community for the provision of fertility and procreation, and
- 2) power (rule by force): functionaries responsible for inner order and stability, plus external affairs.

This division is to be found among the Baduy until today as well as in contemporary Bali. In addition to the differentiation between socio-political power (law and politics) and religious-spiritual potency (fertility and procreation), we find a close interconnection of spatial, social, and cosmological differentiation marking centre and periphery (Tambiah 1976; Tooker 1996). In this model, centre and periphery rather depend on the spatial or social position of the subject and are not marked or locked systems, hence it allows for contextual indexing since the spatial frame for tapping cosmic potency is manipulable and not tied to notions of territory and boundaries. As “the infusion of a cosmic potency in space and the geomantic properties of that potency” (Tooker 1996, p. 343) proceeds right at such a centre, spatial coding and indexing is tied to an underlying power dynamic both channelling and reflecting the flow of potency (*ibid.*, p. 328). As noted by Tooker (*ibid.*, p. 353), “the message being sent is not primarily a message about the design of the cosmos, but about through whom/what cosmic potency is channelled, a message that inevitably sets up a hierarchical frame”.

The spatial alignment of a village (most likely also the house, domain and later Hindu or Islamic polities) and its social structures reflect the directional layout of the flow of potency from a raised centre outward. Key components of this alignment are: centre/periphery (equivalent to inner/outer) relations, upper/lower, and front/back. When a village centre/periphery is properly aligned to the indigenous model of socio-spatial coding and indexing, then the village will be prosperous, with cosmic potency flowing to it through the most centrally located and hierarchically highest individual. However, where potency is not flowing or is diminished

(as at peripheries), space is not neutral. Instead, that space is filled with an improper or draining force. When the directions from which potency flows are reversed as in lowland–upland social relationships, so are the definitions of what may be draining to one’s fortune (Tooker 1996, pp. 328–53). Tooker (1996, pp. 342–47) identifies interdependent themes of socio-political power, whether lowland or highland, developed schematically here:

1. infusion of potency in space;
2. dispersion of potency from an exemplary centre outwards;
3. connection of potency to fertility (agricultural and procreation);
4. the centre can stand for the whole;
5. rituals of dispersion and aggregation.

Another Proto-MP term relevant to the Malayo-Javanic cultural area is **empu*, glossed as “grandparent/grandchild (recipr.); ancestor; lord, master, owner [doublet: **ampu*, **impu2*, **umpu*]”. The title *empu* is associated in Malaya with old makers of daggers (*keris*) and is given in Java to personified daggers; it suggests a master-craftsman. In Bali *Empu* is a master—smith, and contemporaneously a High priest originating from the smith clan (*Pande*). Blust states (ACD) that the clear association of reflexes of PWMP **qian* “ancestor, deity, divinity”:

with Hindu religious ideas in Malay, Javanese, Balinese, and Sasak suggests that this item is not an indigenous term. However, no non-Austronesian source has yet been found for it, and the semantically rather different cognates in Ngaju Dayak, the Chamic languages, and Toba Batak suggest a native word. The attested distribution leaves serious doubt as to whether **qian* should be assigned to PWMP, but if borrowing is not responsible for the forms in Toba Batak and the Chamic languages it must have an antiquity of at least three thousand years.

The time depth of **qian* might be correlated to the ancient system of social control among the speakers of WMP and probably indicate the early consolidation of the Malayo-Javanic law area. PAN **qaNiCu* and PMP **qanitu* “ghost, ancestral spirit; nature spirit; corpse; owl; various plants” represented an important concept in traditional Austronesian-speaking societies. The basic notion appears to be that of “ghost, spirit

of the dead”, as opposed to “soul, spirit of the living” (**sumaged*). In some WMP and OC languages (as Karo Batak and Cheke Holo) and in many CMP languages, reflexes of **qaNiCu* also refer to nature spirits. The term supports my definition of adat as a kinship system between humans, ancestors and nature spirits. Blust (ACD) observes that in Malay, *hantu* refers to “evil spirit; ghost”.

Generic for invisible spirits of evil that work in darkness or secrecy. They include: (1) demons of localities, (2) demons tied to special spots or tutelary spirits of freaks of nature, (3) demons behind natural phenomena, such as echoes, will o’ the wisps, meteors, (4) invisible elves wandering about the earth, (5) evil spirits associated with definite diseases, (6) vengeful ghosts of the dead, e.g. of the murdered, (7) ghost-birds, harpies or vampires, (8) discarded divinities of older faiths, (9) the tiger-spirit attached to a sorcerer, (10) familiar spirits generally, (11) the magician’s head as a familiar spirit, (12) familiar spirits of indefinite local character. Ghosts are credited by Malays with planting wild varieties of fruit; e.g. *pisanj hantu* would mean “wild banana”. The word is therefore common in Malay botanical names.

The next paragraphs hint on terms that indicate a pre-Hindu system of PWMP and/or Malayo-Javanic social control, but a systematic analysis remains to be done. The list is suggestive and incomplete. As the terms are distributed among the here posited Philippine-Celebes and Malayo-Javanic law areas, a detailed mapping of the distribution of the terms following Blust’s model (1981) remains to be pursued to individuate overlapping and/or distinct traits and concepts, and the linguistic dataset then should be triangulated with ethnohistoric research to determine historic timelines for changes and differentiation.

PWMP **pugut* “headless, decapitated” is found in Philippine languages and in Ngaju Dayak, there with a different meaning, but not in the languages of the Malayo-Javanic law area, whereas PWMP **deRep* communal help is found in Borneo, Murut, *dogop* communal help (in harvesting, planting, house-building, etc.), Sundanese, *derep* offer one’s services at the rice harvest, Javanese, *derep* offer one’s services at the rice harvest, and Balinese, *derep* help with the rice harvest in return for a share of the crop. This linguistic evidence supports my above notion of two law areas, of which one is more clan or sib based, with the inclination

to raid, historical headhunting and feuding, whereas the other area is based on mutual cooperation in agriculture and hence, social sanctions, as ostracism and denial of communal support, especially in relation to death ceremonies. The scientifically largely ignored oath, or *adat*-oath is the most feared sanction in Central Kalimantan, Bali and among the Baduy (see Landmann and Fathurrokmān 2012, 2013). PWMP **sapaq* “oath, pledge; curse” is given for the Philippines and Ngaju Dayak, and its doublet: **sumpaq* is found in the Philippines, Malayo-Sumbawan and Javanese, but not in Sulawesi. Blust (ACD) rightly observed that “traces of beliefs in supernatural punishment for swearing a false oath recur sufficiently often to suggest that this term is native”. Hence the term and the idea have not been spread through Malay or Arabic as the modern applications of this term in Islamic societies, as with speakers of Malay, Javanese or Sundanese, often call upon Allah as witness to one’s oath. If one remembers the seventh-century Sabukingking inscription in Old Malay where an oath is to be sworn, this is a striking example of the continuity of native concepts throughout historic sociocultural transformation processes.

An interesting case is PMP **ka-qasiq* “mercy, pity, affection”. In Ilokano (the only reflex in Philippine languages) it is glossed as “mercy, pity, clemency, compassion, commiseration, charity, leniency, indulgence, tolerance, forbearance”, in Malay, Sundanese, Javanese, Balinese it is related to “love and compassion”, whereas in Ngaju Dayak and Old Javanese it refers to a “pitiable condition” and in Sulawesi languages to “poor miserable, in need of help”. PMP **ma-qasiq* “to pity, have mercy on, feel compassion for” is arguably a universal human emotion, yet the word is missing from Philippine languages, but given for Central and South Sulawesi and Chamorro. Makassarēse “feeling of commiseration for another person which leads to sympathy or compassion” might indicate an ethnolinguistic development stage when the requirement of cooperation in agriculture-based domains produced the ability to show mercy and social control techniques of mediation, avoidance and therapy that triumphed over kin-based induced revenge, feuding, raiding, slave taking, and headhunting—this is arguably speculative, but the time depth and the distribution of the glosses might help here. Similarly, reflexes of PWMP **tuRut* “to follow instructions, follow an example; carry along,

give in, allow something to happen” is found in Malay, Karo-Batak, Toba Batak, Sundanese, Old Javanese, Balinese and Sasak.

The PWMP term **ka-salaq-an* demonstrates that the idea of deviance or of offenses that need to be punished. PWMP **ka-salaq-an* is glossed as “error, mistake; fault, offense”. Its reflex in Karo Batak **ke-salah-en* means “guilty”, Toba Batak **ha-sala-sala-an* refers to “a fine with which one makes amends for wrongdoing”, and Old Javanese **ka-salah-an* it is glossed as “to do wrong to; to deviate, go away from, avoid, refuse” in Javanese “mistake; guilt; blame” and in Sundanese “fall into error, be mistaken in; error, mistake”. Another term related to deviance or violating rules is PWMP **busuŋ* (discussed by Blust 1981). Briefly, it is argued there that PWMP **busuŋ* referred to the culturally-defined consequences of violating customary law, in particular to offenses against kin-based social hierarchy. As is apparent from its reflexes, it was believed that the offense would be supernaturally redressed through an affliction of the offender which appears in the form of abdominal swelling. Bothy terms indicate a WMP law area. A salient feature of the Malayo-Javanic law area is ostracism (Landmann and Fathurrokman 2012, 2013). PWMP **buaŋ-an* “one who is banished or cast out” in Malay, Sundanese and Balinese refers to a person “thrown out; in exile, or an exile”—a repater, a person who repeatedly violated rules, and has been as a last remedy banished by its community and denied social support to upkeep order within the community (Landmann and Fathurrokhman 2012, 2013). Today, ostracism and denial of social support, especially in relation with death ceremonies, is the most penal social sanction to be encountered in Bali and among the Baduy.

Blust (2010, pp. 41–42, ACD), discussing the difficulties we encounter when relying on linguistics for the reconstruction of Malayo-Javanic cultural and legal notions connected to the term **datu*, notes that the reflexes of *datu* in the Malayo-Javanic region “present an interesting contrast with the related words in Philippine languages”, showing associations with Islamic of Hindu-Buddhist notions due to the influences—Indic, Javanese, Malay—occurred through centuries of socio-political domination. Thus, each of the distinct blocks of glosses would reflect an added layer of history or cultural influences: “from a term of respect for a kinsman... to a term of respect for the ruler of a

Hindu-Buddhist state, to a term of respect for a titular Muslim official capable of commanding a following through inherited rank”. Blust (2010, p. 42) concludes:

However, in a few languages that were relatively isolated from external influences until the twentieth century, as Gayo, the Batak languages, or Simalur, the word appears to be native, and its sense is distinct from that in languages which historically fell within the so-called Malayosphere or Javanosphere—that is, the sphere of Malay or Javanese cultural domination.

Blust’s linguistic analysis with respect of such a culturally important concept as *datu* may provide a methodological template through which future comparative research on a hypothesized Malayo-Javanic cultural/legal area will have to be pursued against the background of a wider WMP region, and indeed Austronesian, linguistic, ethnic, and cultural complex. This part outlined a few lines of evidence and clues to be pursued to reconstruct a tentative WMP law region and its internal boundaries.

7. *Adats* as Contemporary Trajectories of a Western Malayo-Polynesian and a Malayo-Javanic Civilization

In 1921 Dutch legal scholar Cornelis van Vollenhoven conducted a first comparative study of local legal systems in the Indonesian Archipelago and postulated an Indonesian legal area. One of his contemporaries, J.D. Josselin de Jong (see *id.* 1977), identified the Indonesian Archipelago as an ethnographic “field of study” in 1935. Following van Vollenhoven and J.D. Josselin de Jong, I hypothesize a Malayo-Polynesian *Rechtskreis* or region of social control, including a set of values, norms, authorities, procedures and methods grown out of interactions between segments of social groups and subsequently applied by speakers of MP to control deviance, regulate social life, organize public order and resolve conflicts, which has dispersed with populations migrating throughout the area. A *Rechtskreis* or area of social control refers to the plurality of indigenous law systems in the area that appear to originate in the same legal stock (*Rechtsfamilie*). As there has been a shared concept of kinship, social stratification, and thus a shared pattern

of social control, it is only reasonable to assume a shared legal culture distributed throughout the area.

Then I looked for evidence in the western part of the Indonesia and parts of Malaysia, where WMP languages are spoken, and I further narrowed down my field of enquiry to a “Malayo-Javanic culture and law area” based on family resemblances in pre-Islamic legal systems. Landmann and Fathurrokman (2012, 2013) put forward the hypothesis of an “Malayo-Sumbawan” legal area—our hypothesis has been revised to include the Javanese and the ethnic groups of the Barrier Islands. A second tentative Philippine-Celebes law area has been indicated on basis of specific features of social control. The Papuan and Melanesian Central and Eastern Indonesian cultures and law systems have been entirely excluded from this chapter. The idea of a Malayo-Javanic (or, on an even wider scale, Western Austronesian/Malayo-Polynesian) region of social control is substantiated by the following considerations:

1. Human culture has generic (universal) elements and specific (relativistic) elements, those specific elements are related to the particular histories of individual societies (Kirch and Green 2001; Landmann 2013).
2. Speakers of Western Malayo-Polynesian language phyla share a common ancestral language, as well as a stock of genetic and cultural features.
3. Each social group which has established a pattern of social stratification and social organization has also established a system of social control.
4. Shared cultural features became diffused over the area now inhabited by speakers of the (Western) Malayo-Polynesian language family, and therefore ethnic groups having certain common characteristics might be legitimately taken as samples to reconstruct such prototypical features; likewise, similarities and differences in the legal systems (like, for example, ostracism) could help to map out subgroups and migration patterns.

Despite about two millennia of foreign cultural imprints—Indic, Chinese, Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Islamic, European—, this posited “old law” of the “Malayo-Javanic cultural area” has proven to be very resilient (see

Josselin de Jong 1977, p. 180). The *adat* laws root in eco-social-spiritual kinship relations.

There is a conspicuous absence of Southeast Asia from the record of early civilizations. Suggestively, the paucity and intractability of archaeological data (see Bellina-Pryce this volume), unclear subsistence strategies and agricultural production, the puzzling processes of political formation, and the absence of urbanized centres and written records before the first centuries of the first millennium AD seem to have disqualified the cultures of Southeast Asia from being included into the pantheon of early civilizations.

From reconstructions of their protolanguage, those speakers of MP were small societies of farmers/foragers-hunters, traders and seafarers in an advanced state of social development. In their societies, we find among others: 1) marked localization in material culture (assemblages, jewellery, weapons); 2) local economies characterized by specialized craft communities (localized household-based/community-based units of production and economic specialization); 3) competitive, multi-centred, and overlapping socio-politico-economic mechanisms; 4) long-distance exchange networks; 5) institutions of social status systems that seem to be flexible in practice and included mixed systems of personal achievement and ascribed rank systems, which were linked to spiritual power and the ancestors. These institutions feature elements common to Indonesia, Polynesia, and Madagascar; 6) socio-legal-political institutions, today referred to as *adat*.

The speakers of Austronesian should be included into that pantheon about 4,000 BP as their tangible and intangible culture was in fact complex in terms of technology, science, and division of labour. In this context, Fuller et al. (2011, p. 545) noted:

The actors in the drama of Austronesian and Polynesian origins, who created new worlds in Island Southeast Asia and the Pacific, and seafaring technologies of unparalleled sophistication, were not the river valley civilisations or literate cities that so often capture the archaeological imagination, and dominate the public image of archaeology. Instead, it was small-scale, village or lineage groups of farmers and seafarers who played the key role in the peopling of the Pacific and the cultural transformation of Neolithic Island Southeast Asia.

The speakers of MP had socio-political orders with shared tangible and intangible cultures (art, religion, politics, law) but different patterns of economy, production, and subsistence—and they all lacked urbanization and literacy until the Common Era. The link between civilization, urbanization and literacy marginalizes cultural achievements in a geographic region whose climate and vegetation do neither demand nor do support permanent buildings and hence dense archaeological records (see Bellina-Pryce in this volume).

The myth of origin of *adat* communities describes how the ancestors maintain kinship relations with the spirits of the nature, and nature itself, after the creator being incepted the world (nature and the domain) and brought about the ancestors. In consequence, the life of human groups, their ancestors, the spirits of nature, their domains, and their main subsistence system are closely interrelated. In fact, the “myth of origin” functions as manual for proper conduct among ethnic groups inhabiting the “Malayo-Javanic” cultural area. This manual is further specified by *adat* and should be followed by the post-ancestral generations. The myth of origin reflects the particularities of a group’s founding event (ancestors, potency, social order, and social control) at a specific domain (hill, lake, forest, river, sea). Then, origin and domain are locked into a specific code of conduct, the exemplary conduct of its notables, and the main subsistence system. In consequence, we find a conceptual link between the origin of a group, their domain, the definition of illegal behaviour, and the concept of the management of nature and production (subsistence system) in Malayo-Javanic *adats*.

Today, *adat* is broadly defined as a generic term to indicate the plural indigenous practices and institutions throughout the archipelago; in the course of history, these ideas, practices and institutions adapted Hindu, Islamic and Western legal properties. In fact, *adats* mixed with Hindu, Islamic and Christian traditions depending on the geographic area of investigation. Before and after the arrival of the scriptural religions, *adats* continue to comprise the world of the supernatural and beliefs, the non-empiric dimension of life, the religious-social vision of kinship relationships between cosmos, human, and nature.

Trajectories of assumed ancestral Malayo-Polynesian civilization are to be found in *adats*, local eco-socio-legal-political traditions, basing on

the belief in the sacredness of nature and humanity. A salient feature of the Malayo-Polynesian civilization conserved in *adats* is therefore in my view the concept of an eco-social-spiritual kinship between nature, spirits of nature and humanity, and ancestors or a higher reality suggesting that the well-being of human and nature is inextricably linked and interdependent. Insofar, *adat* provides a religio-social space or an actor-network facilitating interaction between empiric human and non-empiric non-human actors. Each *adat* group—as a shorthand reference for the analytical category of a contemporary representation of the ancestral Malayo-Polynesian civilization—is defined by their distinctive *adat* tradition that regulates subsequent relationships in a specific way:

- a. non-empiric dimension of the creator being;
- b. non-empiric dimension of the ancestors;
- c. empiric dimension of fellow humans;
- d. non-empiric dimension of manifold species of non-empirical beings (spirits of nature);
- e. empiric dimension of nature/soil.

It is noteworthy that *adats* exhibit kinship between humans and nature: in creation myths, nature and its animating spirits often were created before or together with humans and hence they are considered to be siblings. Usually humans need to ask permission before they interact with nature (clearing forest, planting etc). Therefore a strong connection between social group, social control (relations based), and environmental management is prevalent in indigenous legal systems.

Each *adat* community is defined by their distinctive myths and *adat* that regulates eco-social-spiritual kinship affairs providing continuity with the Malayo-Polynesian civilization. Thus it is less surprising when several Indonesian *adat* communities, the heirs of the Western Malayo-Polynesian civilization, retain striking similarities of eco-socio-political concepts despite considerable geographic distance and long-term lack of contact. This similarity extends today to the *suku* of Negeri Sembilan in West Malaysia (*adat* leader, personal communication in 2012). Myth, *adats* and local knowledge show family resemblances of eco-socio-spiritual concepts. In consequence, systems of local knowledge retained in *adats* contain manifold concepts which have theoretical and practical

implications for modern science, because they preserve or continue ancient pre-scientific trajectories of knowledge about 1) values and norms which were in existence before the reification of ideological-dogmatic teaching prevented circular and dynamic ways of acquiring and interpreting knowledge; 2) mechanisms of social control that appear to be re-discovered in social science and humanities as the spiritual roots of restorative justice, alternative dispute resolution, mediation, therapeutic healing, and 3) environmental management that uses “built-in regenerative qualities” (Cowen 1993, p. 2) of nature by not exploiting her in men’s own interest discovered as a spiritual root of deep ecology.

My previous research showed that social control and environmental management contained in myth and *adats* are very similar throughout the Western part of the Indonesian archipelago. Such common concepts and tropes reflect a prehistoric regional consciousness beyond the local—that is, a Malayo-Polynesian civilization. Scholars of comparative ethnography and mythology have detected trails of connection in tropes across the Malayo-Polynesian speaking world and beyond as in China, MSEA and India (see Dentan and Aciri this volume). These shared narratives, tropes or motifs in myths are of particular interest, as oral traditions retell the story of origin and the classification of life in relation to social control and the relation or kinship with nature. Dixon (1996) has shown that myths astonishingly precise recollect real events that happened ~ 12–10 ky ago, including geographic features, plant and animal species.

Malayo-Polynesian civilization is of great significance in human history and culture. In this context, a focus on past millennia of shared cultural heritage provides recourse to a common culture and a conscious understanding of old networks across the Indo-Pacific region. Comparative research on *adat* groups, their stories of origin, social control and environmental management will promote the creation of policies that may be relevant to deal with the social, political and economic problems and conflicts we face today. This might prove true not only for intra-Indonesian affairs but also for regional cooperation as well as the strengthening of political, social and economic bonds between the Indian Ocean, the China Sea, and the Pacific. Such local knowledge constitutes an irreplaceable value and treasure of human history and civilization—indeed, several of those systems of local knowledge have been

acknowledged by national governments or declared by the UNESCO as Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

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5

ETHNOGRAPHIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL CORRELATES FOR AN MAINLAND SOUTHEAST ASIA LINGUISTIC AREA¹

Roger Blench

1. Introduction

1.1 *The MSEA Convergence Zone*

There has been considerable investment in the concept of Mainland Southeast Asia (MSEA) as a linguistic area (Enfield 2003, 2005; Enfield and Comrie 2014). Despite great phyletic diversity, its languages show a remarkable homogeneity in terms of structure. Such patterns are often

¹ This chapter was written following a meeting in Leipzig, MPI, in December 2012 on the languages of Mainland Southeast Asia. It was not intended for the proceedings, as another paper (Blench 2014) has been published, which discusses the genesis of areal linguistic features in some detail. Although I was not at the conference in Singapore where the other chapters in this volume were presented, the topic seemed appropriate for the present volume.

described as *Sprachbunds*, geographical areas characterized by linguistic convergence (Trubetzkoy 1928; Becker 1948). *Sprachbunds* have been identified in many regions of the world, with the Balkan *Sprachbund* the most well-known. Regions of convergence are typically cited in Africa, notably Ethiopia (Ferguson 1976; see also papers in Heine and Nurse 2008) in India, and the Caucasus. However, those characteristics of language which converge are by no means the same in different regions. In some cases, a high incidence of lexical borrowing can coexist with great variations in grammar and morphology, as in Ethiopia. Papua, especially the Sepik, and Arnhem Land languages show strong typological similarities in grammar and morphology in conjunction with high lexical and thus phyletic diversity. A *Sprachbund* may thus be a less useful term than “convergence zone” which leaves open the parameters of similarity.

MSEA is undoubtedly a convergence zone, characterized by five major language phyla: Austroasiatic, Austronesian, Daic, Sino-Tibetan, and Hmong-Mien. Apart from the Andamanese peoples there are no language isolates. Phonology, tones, morphology (or more precisely the lack of it), word and syntactic structures all show remarkable similarities despite the evident lexical diversity (Blench 2014, in press a). No clear consensus in the linguistic literature has emerged to explain this pattern, but we have good evidence for the rapidity with which this type of analogical restructuring occurs. Utsat, the Austronesian language spoken in Hainan island, is a good example of this (Thurgood and Li 2012). Utsat is Chamic, and would have resembled Malay when its ancestral speakers settled on the mainland of modern-day Vietnam some 2,000 years ago. Its syntax and phonology were restructured so that it more closely resembled the neighbouring Austroasiatic languages. However, in 969 AD, part of its speakers fled to Hainan island in Southeast China and there came into contact with both Hlaic and Sinitic languages. Utsat then converged with these languages, losing all its morphology and adopting a complex tonal system.

This is useful evidence that convergence occurs, and because there is historical documentation, we have some estimates of timescales. What is much less clear is why it occurs, and the social and material correlates of this process. There are many examples of the geographical proximity of

languages with quite different structural features and lexicons, particularly in West Africa and the Amazon. If there is an MSEA linguistic area, then it is reasonable to assume we can also characterize a culture area, a bounded region where social and material culture share commonalities. Culture areas may be seen as an unwelcome revival of a Northern European ethnographic tradition long discarded. But not all discarded traditions are wrong; it is simply that their face does not fit at certain times in history. It is certainly the case that the period interpretations of *Kulturkreislehre* have little to contribute to today in the world of sophisticated linguistics, direct dating in archaeology and the analysis of synchronic and historical DNA. But the underlying assumption, that where languages converge and overlap their speakers must interact in ways that reflect similar patterns in cultural life, remains valid. The purpose of this chapter is not to add to the linguistic debate, but rather to put forward social and material correlates of the convergence observed in MSEA. In other words, if languages agree with one another so evidently, then presumably this indicates lengthy and elaborate interchange between populations and thus we should be able to find other types of commonalities. Such a broad question cannot be resolved in a short space, but a tentative model is advanced. This chapter makes some proposals for such common features in the field of material culture and ideas, in particular, music, house-forms, weapons and clothing. A short section discusses whether there is any credible archaeological correlate for the MSEA area while the final part considers the issue of boundaries. To what extent can these be geographically defined, and where do they have extensions? China and the Austronesian world represent the most obvious cases of extensions, since they have carried certain features of the MSEA area to remote locations as a consequence of later expansion.

1.2 Establishing the Boundaries

If there is such a proposed linguistic area how do we identify its boundaries? Clearly, the Sinitic languages share many of the linguistic features of the MSEA region, including static tones, short words and a lack of morphology. Much of Sino-Tibetan in Eastern Nepal and Bhutan also has these features, but both Kuki-Chin and Kiranti are important

exceptions. Island Southeast Asia (ISEA) is dominated by Austronesian languages which are generally non-tonal, with complex morphology, although they share other linguistic traits with MSEA languages. Despite these fuzzy boundaries, the sense that languages spoken in MSEA exhibit a set of common features is palpable. To conceptualize this, we can assign a set of features to an array of MSEA languages; one or more of these may be picked up by an expansionist culture and carried far outside its normal region. For example, Austronesian shares some aspects of MSEA linguistic structure (hence the persistent notion of Austric, said to unite it with Austroasiatic; Reid 2005). Indeed, the long history of genetic hypotheses linking the various phyla of Southeast Asia, and the largely barren debate over the classification of Vietnamese, are inverted reflections of this convergence. Sinitic has carried MSEA features north to the Yangtze, but other languages which have migrated out of the MSEA area have been restructured according to the dominant language matrix. The Munda languages are the most prominent example of this, as their word order and much else approximates to Indic rather than Austroasiatic. Nicobarese, a branch of the archetypical MSEA phylum, i.e. Austroasiatic, moved to ISEA and developed complex morphology. This may have been through metatypy with Austronesian, i.e. persistent bilingualism with an Austronesian language but with limited lexical borrowing, resulting in analogical morphology without segmental cognates. At the same time, language groups that enter an area become restructured to fit the regional pattern. There is no scholarly consensus on the reasons for what appears to be a unique situation, globally.

The one exception to this is Andamanese, for which we finally have reasonable data (Abbi 2006, 2009, 2012, 2013). The Andamanese languages represent at least three distinct phyla. They appear to have been isolated from MSEA culture for a very long time, and their languages now show no trace of convergence with the features of the phyla on the mainland. They are characterized by complex verb morphology (for Great Andamanese), lack of tones and semantic classification of nouns. This argues strongly for an extended period when interaction with Southeast Asian cultures was absent, as does their phenotypical appearance.

Typological convergence has both linguistic and cultural facets. The linguistic element is usually explained by persistent long-term bilingualism without language loss or societal assimilation. In other words, speakers maintain their own language but restructure it to the typological norms of a dominant speech. The broader question then becomes the characterization of the social mechanisms underlying this. What common behaviours underlie both linguistic and cultural similarities? Why is the area relatively neatly bounded when set against comparable situations in Africa or Central America? This requires us to look at edge effects as well as the centre. Something clearly prevents MSEA features diffusing across certain boundaries. The Munda languages, which are underlyingly MSEA insofar as they belong to the Austroasiatic phylum, have ended up resembling the neighbouring Indo-Aryan languages rather than carrying MSEA features into the Indian Subcontinent. Nicobaric has equally lost many MSEA features, for reasons which are less clear. Blench (2013*b*) argues that the Daic languages were originally Austronesian, but their migration into the MSEA region caused them to be restructured as highly tonal, with short words and lacking morphology. The cultural features of Formosan Austronesian languages were also carried along and again appropriately transformed.

Another aspect of this is the prevalence of regional lexemes, words which cross phylum boundaries and whose original affiliation is in doubt. These are not the same as *wanderwords* (< German *Wanderworte*), perplexing lexemes that seem to spread across large regions with marked geographic limitations. Typical MSEA examples are “hawk” (#*g.laŋ*), “tiger” (#*k.la*), “elephant” (#*tea:ŋ*), “river” (*k.loŋ*) and “crossbow” (#*h.naa*). Exactly why animal names are so widespread is unclear; tiger and elephant may well be salient species, but the other items do not seem to have any greater cultural relevance than many others. But for such forms to be so persistent across languages, they must have had a high cultural salience, and this apparently maps against other regional linguistic features.

An influential conceptual framework has been the “Indosphere” and “Sinosphere” proposed by James Matisoff (1991). Matisoff considered that within the Sinosphere languages and cultures showed common

features which resembled those of Chinese culture, and similarly with the Indosphere. Certainly within Sino-Tibetan, the gradual shift towards (or away from) morphological simplicity can be characterized this way. But the term “Sinosphere” suggests a region of Sinitic influence. This is almost the reverse of the proposition advanced here, which is that the early forms of Sinitic were restructured through contact with resident MSEA languages, in other words, influence went in exactly the opposite direction. No obvious term presents itself to describe this hypothesis.

If we are to go beyond linguistics, we will need conspectuses of descriptive ethnography. Historically, although there are some rich monographs, notably Milne (1924) or Izikowitz (1951), the coverage they represent is limited. The first overview of Southeast Asian island groups appears to be Lebar (1972), while mainland groups are covered in the surveys of Schlesinger (1997, 1998, 2003*a*, 2003*b*, 2003*c*, 2003*d*, 2011*a*, 2011*b*, 2011*c*) and, for Laos, Chazée (1999). But this is not a live tradition. We are better at republishing old ethnography than doing new research. Ethnographers are occupied with the quirks of social media and mobile phones rather than the documentation of rural communities. The proposals on which this chapter is based are largely from my own research, bringing together visits to both rural areas and museums throughout Southeast Asia with a trawl of the secondary literature. It should therefore be strongly emphasized that the distribution maps presented here in particular are still highly provisional.

2. Music

2.1 General

In tracking cultural areas, music is a productive and also relatively unusual feature because it is essentially arbitrary. No society needs music to survive, but it is nonetheless a universal feature of social groups and societies and in some it is very elaborated. Societies can make individual choices, but apparently make similar ones over large areas of the world. Humans like music, but they are apparently not very inventive, since whole regions, such as Australia, Papua and the New

World, are missing most classes of instrument types.² As it happens, MSEA is probably the region of the world with the most distinct types of instruments, organologically speaking. This is remarkable, as its music is very largely of a single structural type, i.e. heterophony. This section tracks both musical structure and also the distribution of some specific instrument types. The musical form that most people associate with Southeast Asia, large orchestras dominated by tuned percussion, is almost certainly a late introduction, and thus it cannot be taken to characterize the region.

2.2 Heterophony

Heterophony is a musical texture characterized by the simultaneous variation of a single melodic line. Such a texture is a complex monophony in which there is only one basic melody, realized simultaneously in multiple voices. Each one plays the melody, in either a different rhythm or tempo, or with embellishments and elaborations. Morton (1976, p. 34) proposed the term “polyphonic stratification”, which, he said “seems a more precise description, since each of the ‘layers’ is not just a close approximation of the main melody, but also has distinct characteristics and a style of its own”. This is most clearly heard in the large percussion orchestras such as the Indonesian gamelan, the Thai *pi phat* ensemble, the Cambodian *pin peat* and the Burmese *hsing waing*. The principle was unknown in Western music, and when Debussy heard the first gamelan to visit Paris in 1889, he adopted aspects of heterophony into his compositions.

The traditions which oppose heterophony are monody and polyphony. Monody is characteristic of a vast area stretching between the Maghreb and Northeast India, where the performers each follow a single melodic line, often accompanied by drones or percussion. In the art music of the region, melodies can be extremely elaborated, with rhythms ultra-complex. Polyphony is the simultaneous sounding of

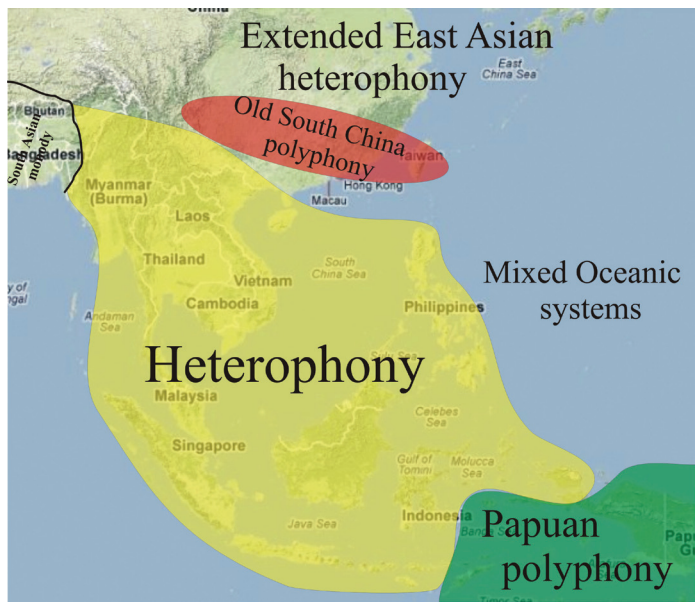
² Broadly speaking, ethnomusicologists divide instruments into four classes: idiophones (percussion), membranophones (drums), chordophones (string instruments) and aerophones (wind).

distinct melodies, and is characteristic of European art music, but also many intriguing folk traditions, including the polychoral music of the Mediterranean islands and the panpipes and distributed flutes of the Volga and Baltic regions. In East Asia, vocal polyphony is characteristic of Yunnan (Zhang 1997) which in turn is linked to the astonishingly diverse traditions of Taiwan (Wu 1994, 1995) and Northern Vietnam, yet those traditions are entirely lost in the Philippines.

Apart from Africa, elsewhere in the Old World, polyphony is common in Melanesia (Blench 2014). Polyphonic flute ensembles and vocal polyphony occur across much of New Guinea (Collaer 1965) and on many of the islands influenced by Papuan cultures (e.g. the panpipe ensembles of the Solomons described in Zemp 1978). Polyphony has also been reported from islands further west where there is strong reason to suspect a Papuan substrate, such as Flores (Rappoport 2011) and Timor (Yampolsky 2015).

Map 5.1 represents these distributions graphically.

MAP 5.1



MSEA Heterophony and Its Extensions

Source: Author.

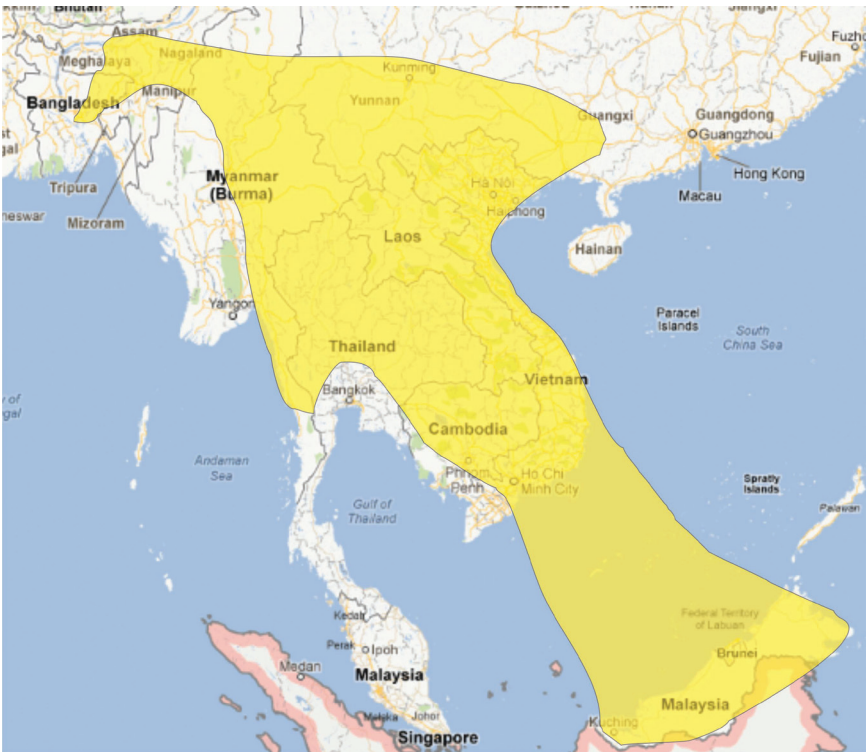
The pattern emerging suggests that heterophony was an ancient structural principle established in the Southeast Asian region bounded strongly in the west by the monodic traditions of South Asia. The folk traditions of South China were polyphonic but heterophony was picked up by Sinitic speakers and underlies the art music and large-scale musical structures of East Asia. Although vocal polyphony was dominant in Taiwan, the Yami, whose ancestors became the proto-Malayo-Polynesians, were monodists. However, heterophony developed in ISEA, with the percussion ensembles which stretch from Lombok to northern Sumatra and the Philippines. Underlyingly, ISEA may well have been polyphonic, reflecting the prior traditions of the pre-Austronesian populations as surviving traditions on Flores and Timor suggest (Kunst 1942, 1950; Rappoport 2011).

2.3 Mouth-organ

One of the most characteristic instruments of the MSEA area is the free-reed mouth-organ (Blench in press *b*). Using the same principle as the European harmonica, free-reeds are found in horns and single tube flute-like instruments. The principle of the free-reed was confined to a specific geographical area in Southeast Asia, before its worldwide diffusion in the last two centuries. Free-reed instruments are widely distributed and morphologically highly diverse, pointing to several millennia of evolution, as confirmed by archaeological evidence. However, most commonly they are found in the free-reed mouth-organ which consists of groups of at least five stopped pipes. The arrangement of the pipes allows the player to sound block chords, which form the underlying metrical frame of large Chinese ensembles. Free-reed mouth-organs are played almost everywhere in the region, and the oldest types have a spherical gourd resonator. The remains of a mouth-organ, alongside the more famous arrays of tuned bells, were found in the tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng, in Suixian country, Hubei and dated to 433 BC (Guangsheng 2000). Metal wind-chests, skeuomorphs of gourds, occur in archaeological sites in Yunnan as far back as 200 BC, as attested in the collections of the Yunnan Provincial Museum, Kunming.

Apart from synchronic ethnography, it is possible to develop the history of the free-reed mouth-organ from archaeological and literary sources. Existing reviews of the free-reed mouth-organ are somewhat limited (e.g. Finsterbüsch 1961; Miller 1981; Schwörer-Kohl 1997). Map 5.2 shows the region where the gourd-resonated mouth-organ is played in Southeast Asia and where it presumably originates. It was picked up by the Chinese for the classical orchestra, probably quite early, developed into the *sheng*, which was in turn borrowed in Japan and Korea as the *shō*.

MAP 5.2



Gourd Mouth-organ in Southeast Asia

Source: Blench (in press b).

There is also a unique extension into Borneo, which bespeaks early contact between the regions, although it never developed into a standard part of the Austronesian instrumentarium (Blench 2011). Iconographic evidence shows that mouth-organs were known in both Java (Borobudur) and Myanmar (Bagan) but were probably never adopted.

2.4 Gong Ensembles

The gong is a circular percussion instrument, usually made of bronze or brass, suspended and struck with a soft, padded beater. It is perhaps the single most characteristic instrument of the Southeast Asian region (Simbriger 1939). Gongs are divided into two main types, the deep-rimmed, bossed gong and the flat, shallow-rimmed gong, known respectively as *mang* and *luó* (鑼) in Chinese. In Borneo and the Philippines there are intermediate types with shallow rims, flat faces and low bosses (Frame 1982). The earliest gong that has been excavated is from the Luobuwan site in Guangxi Province in southwestern China (Wu Ben 2002, p. 111) dating from the early Han Dynasty (i.e. after 202 BC). Casting of gongs was a highly specialized art, only practised in a few places and gongs were traded over great distances as prestige goods (Champion 1869; Nicolas 2009).

Despite its widespread dispersion and significance of the gong, we have no real idea of its antiquity in Southeast Asia; gongs are not shown on the friezes of musical ensembles at Borobudur (eighth to ninth century) or at Mỹ Sơn in Vietnam (fourth to fourteenth century), but they are present at Angkor in the eleventh century. Despite its importance, the gong took a long time to come to the attention of European observers. Peter Mundy described it in Sumatra in 1637:

another Copper Instrument called a gung, wheron they strike with a little wooden Clubbe, and although it bee butt a small Instrumentt, not much More then 1 Foote over and 1/2 Foot Deepe, yet it maketh a Deepe hollow humming sound resembling that of a great bell.

Mundy (1919, p. 123)

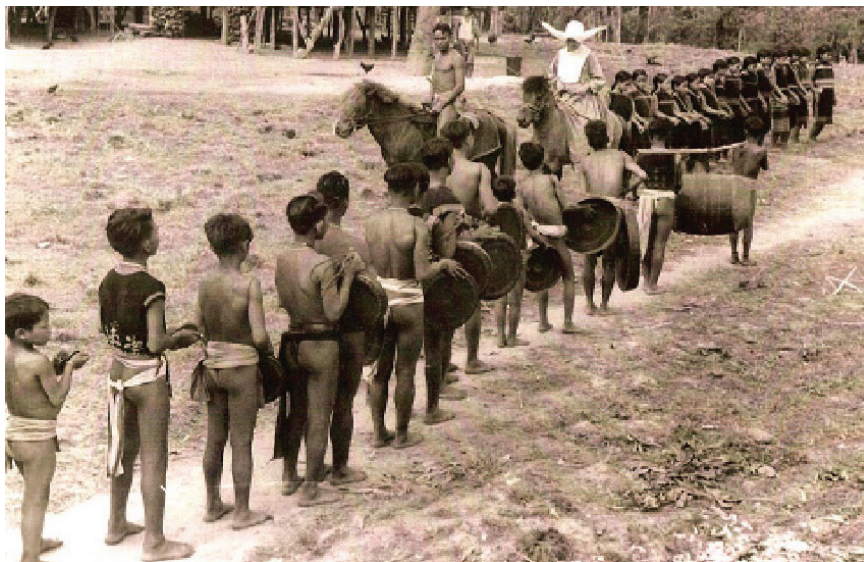
Gongs can be played as single large instruments or in tuned sets, as in the Burmese gong circle, *kyi waing* ကြိုးဝိုင်း. However, their most distinctive music is in the form of large ensembles, where instruments are not tuned but graded in size and timbre. Throughout MSEA and in the Philippines and Borneo, collections of gongs owned by individuals are brought together in ensembles (Collaer 1979; Maceda 1998). In 2005, the gong ensembles of the Vietnamese highlands were named by UNESCO as part of the intangible cultural heritage of mankind. Why the exactly similar ensembles of Cambodia and Laos were excluded probably says more about heritage politics than any subtle appreciation of cultural ethnohistory.

Nonetheless, these ensembles are sufficiently striking to warrant wider recognition. Arsenio Nicolas (2009) has reviewed archaeological finds of gongs in the South China Sea, mostly from shipwrecks, which suggest that they were expensive traded items. Gongs are known throughout much of Northeast India and even into Tibet, but they were never used in large ensembles. Some representations of what are apparently flat gongs appear in India, but these do not survive in the ethnographic record (Arnold 2000). Angkor Wat and Borobudur provide some evidence for the time-depth of gong ensembles. Figure 5.1 shows a fairly typical gong ensemble, played for a marriage ceremony by the Bidayuh people at Annah Rais, Sarawak and Figure 5.2 depicts nuns supervising a Jarai gong performance in the highlands of Vietnam in the 1930s.

Historically speaking it seems as if gongs were first developed within the same bronze-casting culture that developed bronze drums in Vietnam, Laos, South China borderland (see Calo 2014). They spread as a prestige good, a rather less expensive and more portable equivalent of the bronze drum. Their musical qualities and the fact that they could be owned by individual families and brought together for collective celebrations made them a potential fit for the heterophonic music and social structures of MSEA. Gongs were carried to the western edges of ISEA by Chinese traders, but never penetrated far into the

FIGURE 5.1**Gong Ensemble, Annah Rais, Sarawak**

Source: Author's photo.

FIGURE 5.2**Nuns Supervising Jarai Gong Ensemble, Vietnam**

Source: Creative Commons [CC].

eastern islands.³ The growth of *gamelan* culture in Java allowed for a secondary distribution from the eighth century onwards. Map 5.3 shows the approximate distribution of the gong ensemble in Southeast Asia.

MAP 5.3



Southeast Asian Gong Ensembles
Source: Author.

³ The easternmost occurrence of gongs appears to be as bridewealth items on the Raja Ampat islands, in the western tip of Papua Barat (formerly Irian Jaya). These are displayed in the collections of the Loka Budaya Museum, Cenderawasih University, Papua Barat, photographed February 2014.

Individual gongs and rows of gongs in a frame, typically used for orchestral ensembles have a much wider distribution, but they are not expressive of heterophony in the same way as gong ensembles.

3. Crossbow

The crossbow consists of a bow mounted on a stock that shoots projectiles, bolts or quarrels, with the string tensioned mechanically rather than by the archer. It was known in Ancient Greece and became a weapon of choice in medieval Europe. The crossbow was carried around the world by the Spanish, and appears in both West Africa and the New World after the sixteenth century (Balfour 1909). However, its most significant area of distribution is in MSEA. Wooden crossbows are found across the arc of highlands between Vietnam and Eastern Nepal and so skilled were the Montagnards of Vietnam that they were recruited by US Special Forces against the Việt Cộng. Figure 5.3 illustrates a typical wooden crossbow from this region, from the Naga area of Northeast India. Map 5.4 shows the MSEA distribution of the traditional, all-wooden crossbow.

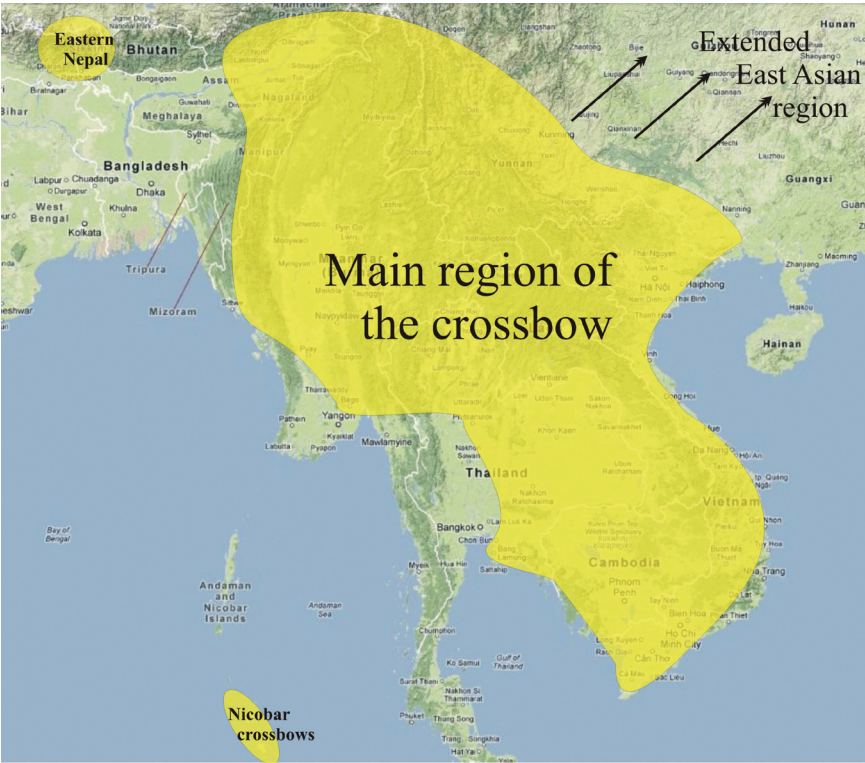
FIGURE 5.3



Naga Wooden Crossbow

Source: Author's collection.

MAP 5.4



Distribution of Wooden Crossbows in MSEA

Source: Author.

Crossbows (弩) were adopted by the Chinese, who rapidly improved on their materials and mechanism (Needham 2004). The earliest evidence for crossbows in China goes back to the mid fifth century BC, at a Chu burial site in Yutaishan, Hubei where bronze bolts have been found. The earliest handheld crossbow stocks with a bronze trigger, dating from the sixth century BC, come from Tombs 3 and 12 at Qufu, Shandong, capital of Lu. Repeating crossbows, first mentioned in the *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, were discovered in 1986 in Tomb 47 at Qinjiazui, Hubei, around the fourth century BC. The earliest Chinese document to mention the crossbow is from the fourth–third century BC.

As with the mouth-organ, the crossbow is a distinctive MSEA technology, adopted and further spread by the Sinitic cultures. Schuessler (2007) argues that Old Chinese **nâʔ* is a borrowing from Austroasiatic. This is credible on distributional grounds, since other Sino-Tibetan languages have quite different terms. Table 5.1 shows related MSEA terms for “crossbow” reflecting a protoform something like *#hnaa*.

In ISEA, the crossbow was only present on the Nicobars, where it constitutes striking evidence for the Austroasiatic migration to the archipelago. The blowpipe was otherwise dominant elsewhere in the archipelago.

TABLE 5.1
MSEA Terms for “Crossbow” Reflecting *#h.naa*

Phylum	Subgroup	Language	Form
Austroasiatic	Bahnaric	PSB	*sdna
	Khmeric	Khmer	snaa
	Nicobaric	Nancowry	fəɲ
	Pearic	Pearic	thəəma
	PMnong	PMnong	*so'na
	Vietic	PVietic	*s-na:ʔ
Sino-Tibetan	Sinitic	Chinese	nǔ
	Sinitic	Old Chinese	*nâʔ
	Nung	Rawang (Nung)	thəma
	Nung	Dulong	tānā
	Lolo-Burmese	Moso	tāna
	Jingpho	Jingpho	ndan
Daic	Kam-Sui	Sui	hna
	Tai	Proto-Tai	*hnaa ^c
		Northern Tai	naa (bolt)
		Thai	naa
Hmong-Mien		Proto-Hmong-Mien	*nha ^B

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4. Raised Houses

One of the most distinctive features of Southeast Asia is the raised house, where the occupants live at least one storey above the ground. Not typical of the Chinese, it was noted by early observers as in use among the Tai populations of Yunnan. It is found across MSEA, but also in ISEA (Waterson 1990). Raised houses thus occur between Northeast India and Eastern Indonesia. Curiously, the *morung*, a large house for an extended family with an A-frame roof, typical of the Naga area of Northeast India, constitutes a major geographical exception, as these are flat on the ground. Sometimes these houses can be raised very high indeed, as the Orang Ulu house in Borneo shows (see Figure 5.4). These houses are found in remote interior parts of Sarawak, and protect the inhabitants against floods as well as wild animals.

FIGURE 5.4



Orang Ulu House, Sarawak

Source: Author's photo.

The function of raised houses is somewhat variable. It is defensive, and protects against the depredations of termites, flooding, and allows livestock to be kept beneath the living space. It is one of the few features of the region for which we have good archaeological evidence, since the piles of such houses are found at Hemudu in Southeast China dated to around 7,000 Before Present [BP] (Chang 1989). In Northeast India, this classic MSEA structure halts where it confronts Tibetan-style housing, which has a multi-storey structure with an enclosed basement, and with Assamese ground-level houses. The typical Papuan house, with its steeply pitched roof, has a quite different design. Map 5.5 shows the distribution of the raised house in Southeast Asia.

MAP 5.5



Raised Houses in MSEA and ISEA

Source: Author.

5. The Emblematic Use of Clothing in Marking Ethnicity

Anyone who visits ethnographic museums from Itanagar to Hanoi will have been alternately impressed and bored by the endless displays of folk costume. Mannequins of crumbling plaster display complex

arrays of cloth and jewellery that almost no one wears today outside cultural festivals. However, it is clear from old photographs that much of this was everyday wear until recently, and still may be in remote areas. Costume is highly politicized; the Kohima museum in Nagaland displays the proposed gear for a “unitary Naga lass” (see Figure 5.5). Designed by Naga intellectuals frustrated by Naga disunity, costume synthesizes highly differentiated cloth and ornaments characteristic of different Naga subgroups (e.g. Oppitz et al. 2008). The Hmong-Mien in particular distinguish all their subgroups by the costumes they wear, so that language and dress are closely correlated.

FIGURE 5.5



Naga Lass, Kohima Museum

Source: Author's photo.

All this reflects a widespread situation in MSEA, the naming of ethnolinguistic groups with clothing terminology. “Folk costumes” are a staple of ethnographic museums throughout most of Eurasia. However, costumes are generally areal markers rather than used to differentiate ethnolinguistic groups. So there is a Basque costume, but its elements are also characteristic of non-Basques in northeastern Spain and adjacent France. Costume rarely marks ethnicity so sharply as in Southeast Asia. Austroasiatic, Daic, Hmong-Mien and Sino-Tibetan speaking peoples all use this convention. For example, the Mien peoples have numerous subgroups, including the White Trouser, Black Trouser, Flowery and Longshirt Mien, ethnolinguistic subgroupings based on dress. However, the practice of defining subgroups in this way is lost in Northeast India, and it is absent among all the large pluralistic groups such as the Chinese, Viet, Khmer, and Thai. It is also curiously absent in ISEA, where it might have been expected to spread.

These examples are about the unity of a culture area, and at first sight this might suggest a high degree of differentiation. However, as has been observed with the Hmong-Mien, the greater the emphasis on difference, the less significant linguistic differences really are. Sigmund Freud aptly named this “narcissism of small differences” (*der Narzißmus der kleinen Differenzen*). The two parts of Hmong-Mien consist of languages which are little more than dialect chains, often mutually intelligible, despite the striking contrasts of costume in the market. This may correspond to emblematicity in language, i.e. the notion that each subgroup has a word which demarcates it from another, disguising the fact that the other 99 per cent of the words are in fact the same or close cognates.

6. Could MSEA Area Culture Have an Archaeological Correlate?

Some of the cultural attributes discussed in this chapter must be of significant age. We know from both comparative ethnography and archaeology that raised houses are at least as old as the settlement of Hemudu (7,000 BP). Crossbow mechanisms and bronze resonators for mouth-organs are abundant in Chinese archaeology. Unfortunately,

partly due to preservation conditions, the general archaeology of MSEA itself is much weaker with respect to the type of material excavated.

However, there is a deep-level lithic culture which corresponds extremely well with the boundaries of MSEA, i.e. the so-called “Sumatraliths” that characterize the Hoabinhian technocomplex. Sumatraliths are a type of stone tool, often made from river pebbles, and very roughly shaped. The precise use of Sumatraliths is still under discussion, but there is a growing consensus that their main use was to process bamboos, rattans and other wood-like plants (Blench 2013*a*). Strictly defined, Hoabinhian tool types are virtually absent from ISEA, except for those in Northeast Sumatra (Forestier et al. 2005). Map 5.6 shows the approximate region where Sumatraliths are found. Hoabinhian culture (*Văn hóa Hòa Bình*), named for the type-site in

MAP 5.6



Approximate Zone of Sumatraliths

Source: Author.

Vietnam, describes stone artefact assemblages in Southeast Asia with flaked, cobble artefacts (see Figure 5.6), ascribed to the period 10,000–2,000 BC in earlier sources (Matthews 1964, 1966; Gorman 1971; Anisytukin and Timofeyev 2006). Bacsonian is often regarded as a variation of the Hoabinhian industry characterized by a higher frequency of edge-ground cobble artefacts, produced by direct percussion with hard hammerstone, dated to c. 8,000–4,000 BC.

Postulating the psychic unity of a region based on the distribution of lithics would rightly be regarded with suspicion by archaeologists and linguists alike. Nonetheless, it is helpful to think that prior to the Neolithic a widespread common culture had already been established through the region, which implies a common approach to managing the natural environment. The key issue is probably boundedness, the notion that when a new idea or technology enters the regional culture, whether the crossbows or a musical instrument, they slot into a bounded geographical and linguistic area and increase the level of interaction which produces the observed linguistic consequences.

FIGURE 5.6



Sumatraliths from Malaysia

Source: Author.

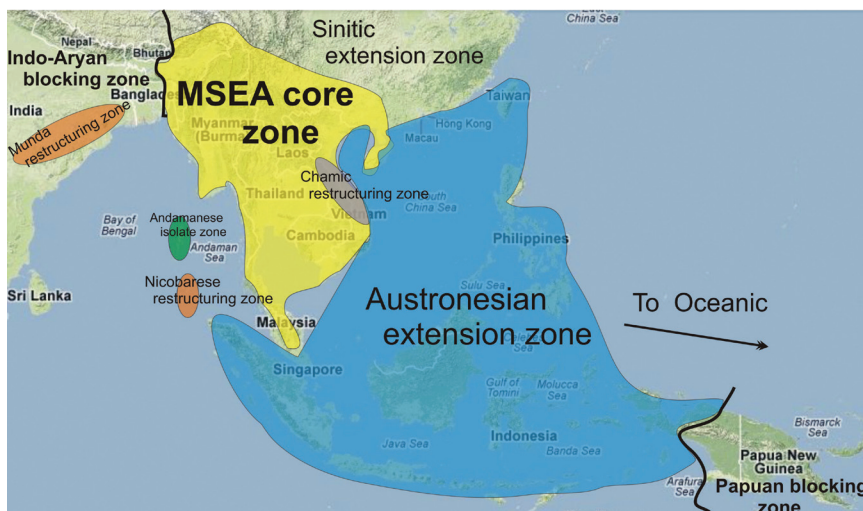
7. Core and Extensions of the MSEA Area

The pattern emerging from these examples is that of “core” and “extension”, characteristic objects or behaviours can be consolidated in nuclear MSEA but spread further in slightly unpredictable ways, when picked up by an expansionist neighbour. Most notably, there are strongly delimited lines where a cultural zone is sufficiently marked as to block further spread. In the west, this is the Indosphere (see §1.2), in the southeast, the Papuan area and the Altaic zone of North China. ISEA is a receptor zone, where at least some MSEA innovations were picked up and underwent secondary spread (Blench 2012). The Sinitic zone was also susceptible to influence, but the Altaic zone to the north marked the final boundary.

There are also what I am calling here “restructuring zones”, where a community is a geographical outlier, and undergoes analogical restructuring as a result of interaction with the dominant cultural matrix. The most obvious example of this is the Munda area of Northeast India, where Austroasiatic languages underwent major typological change. Chamic (a group of Austronesian languages spoken on the Vietnamese mainland) and Nicobaric (a branch of Austroasiatic spoken on the Nicobar islands) represent other well-known examples. In addition, the Andamanese isolate zone is a small region of languages and cultures protected by geography from the large-scale processes taking place on the nearby mainland. This situation can be represented schematically as in Map 5.7.

Beyond these geographical observations, however, is the question of the forces driving linguistic and cultural convergence. Whatever the explanation, the answer must be social, rooted in the way individuals and communities conceptualize themselves and interact with one another. Linguistic convergence must be a product of this, not its cause or an independent variable. The hypothesis is that the underlying feature of MSEA culture responsible for this cultural and linguistic convergence zone is its high degree of social consensus. This involves making sociological generalizations about a vast and highly diverse region and some readers will inevitably consider the empirical basis for such a model hard to substantiate and therefore impossible to demonstrate. Speculations are what

MAP 5.7



Core and Extensions of the MSEA Linguistic Area

Source: Author.

they are. However, no matter how sceptical the reader, the distributional data highlighted in this chapter are real and need explanation and that explanation must include a sociological element.

A not atypical journalistic article is prone to contrast India and China, emphasizing democracy in India and authoritarianism in China. Clearly caste groups and ethnic minorities in India do not necessarily benefit from democracy in India while the Tibetans, Mongols and Uyghurs in China do experience the heavy hand of the state. Nonetheless, as the 2012 changeover in the Chinese leadership shows, a remarkably high proportion of the Han population generally accepts that the state will act for their benefit, and consensus would be an alternative characterization. This higher degree of social consensus may also be the key feature which marks the MSEA area and East Asia more broadly. Families, communities, regional governments and nation states all consider individualism and personal freedom of less importance than the harmony of the social unit. Put another way, social obligations always take precedence over individual freedoms. In linguistic terms this would

involve placing greater emphasis on speaking in a way comparable to those you encounter, or cultures with which you wish to assimilate.

To understand this model by exploring a contrasting region, the Papuan area on the southeastern edge of ISEA illustrates the nature of acephalous societies characterized by a strong emphasis on individualism and personal achievement. In the Papuan area, there are no large-scale, hierarchical societies with economic pluralism and the division of labour. Equally, Papua is characterized by a high degree of linguistic diversity. Papuan cultures are well known to anthropologists for the “big man” culture, the achievement of social status through acquisition of wealth and the corresponding lack of social hierarchy. There is some evidence that social differentiation is underlined by the conscious attempt to make your language as different as possible from that of your neighbour.

An intriguing cultural correlate of this is that MSEA is above all the area where Buddhism has been accepted and persisted. Buddhism originated in the northeastern area of the Indian Subcontinent, but died out in South Asia (except in Nepal and the areas bordering the Himalayan region, as well as Sri Lanka) a few centuries after its spread, and has made only a limited comeback in recent times. Dividing into two streams early in its career, it became dominant in Sri Lanka, Tibet and Bhutan, and MSEA.⁴ Although, as the archaeological remains testify, it was clearly present in ISEA, i.e. in most of Sumatra and certain areas of Java, Bali, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi, it never became dominant, and coexisted or synthesized with Śaivism throughout most of its history. More importantly, Buddhism eventually died out in ISEA by the sixteenth century when Islam became the dominant religion of both the elites and the general population.

Buddhism emphasizes the insignificance of the self and the importance of denying the ego, which certainly fits the consensus model described above. I am not arguing that Buddhism is responsible for the

⁴ Although Buddhism was never dominant in China and Japan, it became very important and well-represented in those countries throughout their histories.

MSEA convergence phenomenon: indeed the reverse, i.e. that it was accepted and has persisted because of its congruence with an existing mindset. As a consequence it has therefore become dominant in MSEA, whereas it has withered in much of the Indian Subcontinent, where its value system is ultimately in contradiction to underlying cultural norms which emphasize extreme social differentiation. Interestingly, Hinduism, a religion which made important incursions throughout Southeast Asia (both on the mainland and in the islands) over nearly two millennia, has died out everywhere except Bali, Bali-influenced areas of Lombok, and pockets in remote areas of East Java.

The incursion of Islam also seems to tell something of the same story. Its impact on MSEA has been very slight, with the exception of the Malay Peninsula, which was settled from the islands. By contrast, it has been very influential in ISEA almost as far as Melanesia. This could well be related to the much more opportunistic nature of Austronesian culture, who began their voyages from Taiwan as highly mobile fisher-foragers (Bulbeck 2008; Blench 2012). Their very success seems to have been their capacity to adapt and adopt cultural identities as they went, and Islam, with its mercantile ideology, seems to have been a good “fit” with their existing patterns.

Two objections to this model seem obvious, i.e. the prevalence of violent confrontation between different ethnic groups in Southeast Asian prehistory, and the emblematic use of dress and jewellery styles to express difference. Even a cursory reading of MSEA history reveals a mind-numbing succession of wars between the Thais, Laos, Burmese, Khmer and Viet, seeming to contradict state philosophies espousing Buddhist values—notably those underlining the importance of peace. However, violence itself does not run counter to the model described above; indeed it is driven by the wish to enforce consensus. Communal values are not those of the nation state and persist long after individual polities pass into history.

More intriguing is the highly characteristic pattern described in §5, i.e. the use of dress styles to mark ethnicity. One way of thinking of this is that ethnicity in MSEA corresponds to clan or moiety in other regions of the world. Acephalous societies in Africa and Melanesia are

typically organized via opposing kin groups. The formation of clans or similar units is not seen as contradicting the larger ethnic unit, and clans do not usually wear marked dress or ornament. Hence dress in MSEA expresses unity in diversity, a rather more formal way of operationalizing difference. A parallel in western culture might be the ephemeral cultures of teenagers, marking their similarity to one another, differentiating them from adults through the use of emblematic language and dress. Teenagers, however, are unlikely to think this marks them as “not” English, French or whatever.

8. Conclusion

This chapter provides preliminary evidence for an MSEA culture area which corresponds to a well-established linguistic convergence zone. Language and material culture are relatively objective markers which can be plotted on a map and the map reveals a series of sharp delimitations, beyond which neither cultural items nor social models easily spread. The assumption is that this culture area also reflects a structural and psychological map of the many societies within the region. The corresponding psychogeographic map which establishes the core and delineates the boundaries is inevitably harder to draw and will remain controversial, especially as it has clear political implications, some of which will be unpalatable to nationalists. Descriptive ethnography is not much in favour these days, but a greater understanding of the sociology and culture of MSEA peoples will extend our understanding of the structural principles that underlie them.

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6

WAS THERE A LATE PREHISTORIC INTEGRATED SOUTHEAST ASIAN MARITIME SPACE? Insight from Settlements and Industries

Bérénice Bellina

1. Introduction

The focus on globalization has encouraged researchers in the humanities to rethink cultural processes on wide spatial and temporal scales, i.e. those of the world and the long-term (Assayag 1998), and to emphasize processes of social, economic and cultural integration.¹ When understood

¹ I follow Bentley's (1999) minimal characterizing criteria, i.e. that integration takes place when cross-cultural interactions "bring about a division of labour between and among interacting societies or when they facilitate commercial, biological, or cultural exchanges between and among these socially and economically integrated maritime spaces interacting societies on a regular and systematic basis".

as an approach to history, researchers looked for processual continuities from prehistory to the modern era that could explain contemporary globalization (Beaujard 2005, 2012*a*, 2012*b*; Beaujard, Berger and Norel 2009). Researchers hold that human history, when understood as a global process, has already experienced several sociocultural translocal processes of “globalizations”, such as Hellenization and Romanization in Europe, and Indianization and Islamization in Southeast Asia (Amselle 2000; Assayag 1998). While those translocal processes have been made the subject of abundant research over an extended period of time, the hypothesis of a maritime Southeast Asian globalization, possibly dominated by Austronesian speakers, is a relatively new field of research. The notion of an integrated maritime Southeast Asian space has long been advocated by Braudel-inspired historians such as Anthony Reid, for whom long-established interconnections within the South China Sea accounted for the strong spatial and human integration he observed in Southeast Asia in modern times. However, recent advances in the field of prehistory led a few archaeologists to argue for an interaction sphere that existed already in the prehistoric period (Bulbeck 2008; Hung et al. in press; Solheim 2006). Indeed, it is now demonstrated that in the second millennium BC populations actively interacted and exchanged technologies, human experiences and valuable goods thanks to an advanced sailing technology within the South China Sea. From then on some networks were established, as indicated by shared ceramic traditions and the circulation of characteristic nephrite ornaments. For these archaeologists, these interactions could well have laid the ground for common practices and cultural affinities accounting for the ease with which populations have been circulating and exchanging goods and ideas from the Metal Age, by 500 BC. From this period onward, exchanges increased and trans-ethnic networks began to generate significant quantity of characteristic stone and glass ornaments, distinctive decorated ceramics related to the “Sa Huynh-Kalanay complex”—an expression forged by Solheim (1961)—whose distribution spans from the shores of the Thai–Malay Peninsula to those of the Philippines and of the Indonesian archipelago. In other regions, the common distribution of similar prestige goods across large zones observed in various chiefdoms in Central America,

in Hawaii (Hantman and Plog 1982; Earle 1990), and in the Philippines (Junker 1990, 1993, 1999; Bacus 2003) had been interpreted as manifesting an inter-polity symbolic system expressing elite group alliances and shared identity. In such context, it becomes legitimate to question whether some political and sociocultural configurations that prefigured certain patterns described for the historical periods in maritime Southeast Asia developed during the Metal Age. This in turn leads us to question the plausibility that translocal cultural dynamics existed in maritime Southeast Asia before “Indianization”. In other words, is there evidence for shared patterns of values, norms and cultural models during the late prehistoric period that could be indicative of an ancient regional integration? If this were the case, can we identify common socio-political strategies? Also, can we observe an evolution through time and especially when South and Southeast Asian networks intertwined by the late centuries BC? These are some of the issues this chapter will tackle based on recent archaeological data. Two types of evidence, I feel, are especially relevant for the discussion:

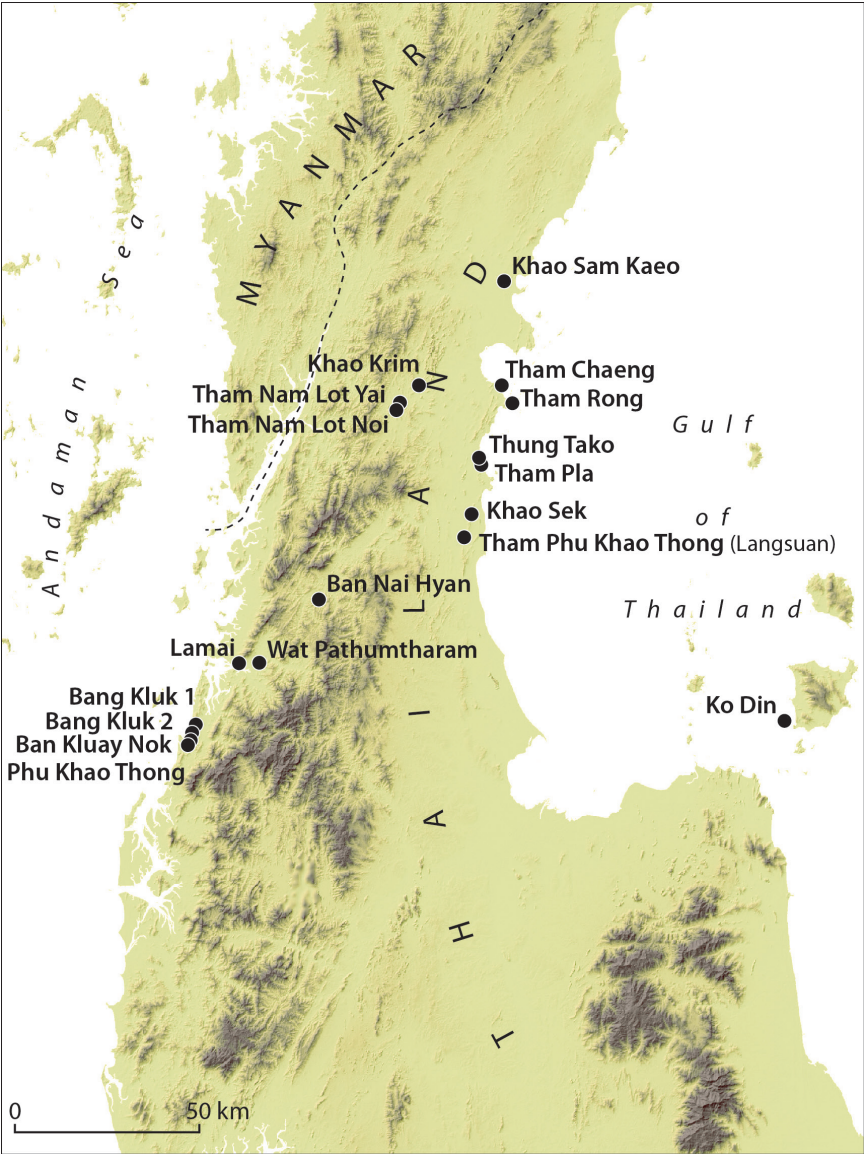
The first one worth considering, even if data are still scarce, comes from investigations of late prehistoric settlements with respect to Co Loa in northern Vietnam and Khao Sam Kaeo in the Thai–Malay Peninsula. Nam C. Kim (2013) and Bérénice Bellina (Bellina et al. 2014; Bellina 2016, in press) respectively argue that for a late prehistoric emergence of urbanism, a process traditionally considered as a historical one correlated to the development of early States. Though the two locales belonged to very different contexts, and Co Loa being not immediately adjacent to maritime networks, they still provide useful insights to the socio-political and economic changes that many populations were facing in Southeast Asia at that time, which arguably motivated their elite to display their political agenda upon their surrounding topography. How did they choose to materialize their power and what may have been their sources of inspiration? This chapter argues that there already are hints of an urban tradition in the maritime region, and that these features prefigure later historical configurations.

The second source of information comes from the analysis of the socio-technical system of two types of industries found within maritime networks, which may be seen as indicative of shared models. The two

are hybrid-type productions. The first, i.e. stone ornaments, associates South Asian technologies and regional style; the second, i.e. the “Sa Huynh-Kalanay” ceramics, often associates local technologies with South China Sea style. What does this common lexicon tell us about the different societies referring to it? I will propose some hypotheses on the socio-political context of the societies producing or ordering it and the potential socio-political strategies they may have served, and argue in favour of the existence of an early integration whereby trading nodes constituted cradles for hybrid cultural products at the heart of these socio-political practices.

The data discussed here were obtained by the Thai–French archaeological mission in the Upper Thai–Malay Peninsula. The Thai–Malay Peninsula has long been a crossroads for cultural and material exchanges. This programme aims at defining the co-evolutions of the different populations of the Peninsula and of their environment in relation to long-distance trade, whether those were involved directly or indirectly. A particular focus is made on the pivotal period of the region’s integration in the so-called Maritime Silk roads, by the mid-first millennium BC, to highlight the possible continuities or discontinuities in the network’s socio-political and cultural constructions following this interlocking. To tackle these issues, the Thai–French Archaeological mission in Upper Thai–Malay Peninsula (regions of Chumphon and Ranong) excavates and surveys different types of sites representing various types of populations, socio-political organizations and environments (see Map 6.1). Those range from coastal sites with socially complex systems, cosmopolitan configurations and highly specialized crafts such as at the early urban and industrial port of Khao Sam Kaeo (Bellina-Pryce and Silapanth 2008; Bellina, Epinal and Favereau 2012; Bellina in press), Phu Khao Thong (Ranong province) (Bellina 2014; Borell, Bellina and Chaisuwan 2014) and Khao Sek (Langsuan, Chumphon province) to coastal and offshore cave sites such as Tham Tuay, Tham Phla, Phu Khao Thong (Langsuan) and Koh Din, used as temporary camping sites and for funerary purposes (Bellina, Epinal and Favereau 2012), and finally to sites in the interior along transpeninsular routes, cave sites and open air sites such as Tham Than Nam Lot. The materials

MAP 6.1



Archaeological Map of the Chumphon and Ranong Provinces,
Thai-French Archaeological Mission in Upper Thai-Malay Peninsula

Source: Author.

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or features discussed in this article are diverse and come from these different types of contexts, which exemplify the complexity of late prehistoric socio-political networks.

2. Background: The Construction of the Notion of an Integrated Maritime Space

Before examining settlement and socio-technological evidence that could provide hints on shared cultural patterns and in particular of socio-political traits during the late prehistoric period in maritime Southeast Asia, a historiographic overview of the issue is in order.

In Southeast Asian historiography, the notion of continuity has largely dominated explanations on the construction of socio-political models and, more broadly, of cultural configurations (Reid 1988, introduction; Lieberman 2003; Andaya and Andaya 2015, pp. 35–81). This continuity has been postulated at a time when little was known on the prehistoric and early historical periods. In the 1980s, Ian Glover opened the avenue to studies of long distance late prehistoric period exchange networks, to which were traditionally associated issues of State and urban formation, and in particular with South Asia (Glover 1983, 1989, 1990*a*, 1990*b*, 1991, 1996*a*, 1996*b*, 2000). From then, the topic that has received most interest has been the transition from late prehistoric chiefdoms/kingdoms to States in relation to trade. Explanations conceived that the region owed much of its economic development to demands from South Asian or Chinese markets, whilst its political development resulted mainly from the desire to control this trade (Wisseman Christie 1995). Inspired by later historical situations, it was hypothesized that peer-polity interactions between the late prehistoric competing polities was a likely driving force for the transmission and elaboration of political models found within historical states (Andaya 2008; Wisseman Christie 1995, p. 250). Continuity and external impetus from her two neighbours China and India have long been seen as two main dynamics of Southeast Asian historical trajectories. This position prevailed even if the externalist paradigm, born during the colonial period, that contrasted a coherent universalist/global Indic cultural package to a mosaic of local, indigenous Southeast Asian responses had been obsolete for a long time (Pollock

1998, 2000). It has been shown that there existed no unified Indian culture that produced Indianization and that South Asia itself partook of the same process of Indianization (Kulke 1990; Pollock 1996, 1998, 2000, 2006). Second, in both South and Southeast Asia, societies have been shown to be characterized by their diversity and their various levels of social development (Smith 1999; Morrison and Junker 2002). Third, research focussing on Southeast Asian early historical settlements associated to the earliest States has been critical in showing continuity with previous occupations. Those settlements include mainly Funan at Oc Eo and Angkor Borei in the Mekong delta (Stark 1998, 2006; Stark et al. 1999; Stark and Bong 2001; Manguin 2004), Go Cam (a site of the polity of Linyi) and Tra Kieu (the ancient capital of Champa) in Central Vietnam (Glover and Yamagata 1995; Dung, Glover, and Yamagata 2006; Yamagata 2007, 2014), Bujang Valley remains of Kedah in Peninsular Malaysia (Chia and Mokhtar 2011; Mokhtar 2009 and undated) and Tarumanagara and Batujaya in West Java (Glover and Yamagata 1995; Dung, Glover, and Yamagata 2006; Yamagata 2007, 2014).

Simultaneously, understanding of Southeast Asian long distance late prehistoric networks benefited from the construction of broad comparative regional databases. Data came from fine compositional and technological analysis of crafts products circulating on these networks. Those include, to cite only a few, the Indian-type of knobbed or decorated high-tin bronze bowls (Glover 1991; Srinivasan and Glover 1995; Srinivasan 1997, 2010; Pryce et al. 2011, 2014), glass (Dussubieux 2001; Dussubieux and Gratuze 2010; Dussubieux, Gratuze, and Blet-Lemarquand 2010; Dussubieux et al. 2012; Carter 2013), chalcedony ornaments (Theunissen 1998; Theunissen, Grave, and Bailey 2000; Bellina 2001, 2003, 2007; Theunissen 2007; Carter 2013; Carter and Dussubieux 2016), nephrite ornaments (Hung et al. 2007; Hung and Bellwood 2010), Indian fine wares such as rouletted ware and kendi-type of ware (Bouvet 2006, 2011, 2012), Sa Huynh-Kalanay-related ware (Favereau 2015; Favereau and Bellina in press) and metals (Pryce, Bellina-Pryce, and Bennett 2008; Murillo-Barroso et al. 2010; Pryce et al. 2011, 2014). Beside helping to trace networks and their evolution through time, these databases began to provide firmer grounds to reconstruct socioeconomic contexts and cultural interactions.

To what extent can we trace back in time the antiquity of these networks is a question at the hearth of current research. It is now clear that populations had been actively interacting, exchanging technologies and valuable goods thanks to an advanced sailing technology prior to the Neolithic (Bulbeck 2008; Soares et al. 2016). In maritime Southeast Asia, the dispersal of Austronesian-speaking groups has long been correlated to the spread of agricultural practices (Bellwood 1995, 1996, 1997, 2007), a model that has been increasingly contested (Blench 2012, 2014, under press; Meacham 1984–85; Oppenheimer 2004; Szabo and O’Connor 2004; Spriggs 2007; Bulbeck 2008; Lewis 2008; Hunt and Rabett 2013; Blench 2014). Nowadays, three main models explain prehistoric maritime Southeast Asian connectivity. Hung and Bellwood (2010) postulate the permanence of exchange networks and continuity of some cultural practices since the Neolithic through a combination of trade and Austronesian-speaking population movements. The incentive for the circulations would have begun with the search for land, agriculture, demographic expansion and religion. Solheim and Bulbeck see a trans-ethnic trading and communication network which ended up producing a common culture and an Austronesian lingua franca whose main incentive was trade (Solheim 2006). Recently, Bulbeck (2008) suggested that the Austronesian-speaking traders were, thanks to their advances in navigation technology, highly mobile fisher-foragers entering a previously existing Austro-Asiatic interaction sphere. Bulbeck (*ibid.*), Blench (2012) and Soares et al. (2016) disconnect the movements of Austronesian-speakers from agriculture. Blench opposes an alternative view whereby the so-called “Austronesian cultural package” is a late construction made from elements that Austronesian speakers integrated opportunistically from the various pre-existing populations they encountered on their way, a long process he calls “austronesianization”. For him, a pan-Austronesian religion and trade were the incentive of this cultural harmonization. These models have implications on the later cultural and linguistic shared models leading to question whether these interactions and networks established during the second millennium were maintained through time. Hung and Bellwood and their colleagues believe that a continuity existed. They observe shared pottery traditions as early as the second millennium BC

in the South China Sea (the Bin Chau tradition) that would translate into links existing between the Philippines and Vietnam, and which would prefigure the late prehistoric Sa Huynh-Kalanay pottery tradition (Hung et al. in press). They also believe that the spread of jar burial tradition may result from these privileged sea links. The antiquity and potential permanence of networks led some researchers to hypothesize that this period could also correspond to the formative period when socio-political patterns started to be developed.

Let us now turn to recent lines of data that could bring light on the question as to whether data from settlement configuration and from specific craft productions entailed different levels of networks.

3. Late Prehistoric Settlements: Can We Talk of the Emergence of an Early Maritime Urban Tradition?

Early Southeast Asian urbanization remains poorly understood, particularly in the maritime area. The emergence of cities in Southeast Asia is a very complex and hotly debated issue that this chapter will not tackle as I deal with it elsewhere (Bellina in press). The issue is complex insofar as various definitions apply to what we may now call a “city”, and because of the generally poor preservation of settlement remains in a tropical context. My aim here is to argue that from the late centuries BC complex settlements started to emerge; these settlements were seats of polities whose configurations translate into centralization and a coherent political and socioeconomic agenda. In maritime Southeast Asia, major nodes were characterized by a cosmopolitan configuration; they concentrated in socio-professional quarters of various specialized groups producing hybrid cultural products. These may be perceived to prefigure the later city-states that thrived along the shores of the South China Sea.

Khao Sam Kaeo represents such polity. It is a coastal complex polity whose emergence is clearly linked to the development of the maritime silk roads and which is securely dated to the very early fourth to second or first centuries BC. The site has been described elsewhere in detail (Bellina-Pryce and Silapanth 2008; Bellina et al. 2014; Bellina and Bernard, in press) so here suffice it to summarize the main features

necessary for the discussion. Located eight kilometres from the current coastline, the site extends over four hills and is limited on its western side by the River Tha Tapao, which connects it with the China Sea in the east and with resource-rich forests in the north. Its size is of 55 ha and its occupation *stricto sensu* extends over 35 ha delimited by walls and palisaded ramparts. The bordering walls include simple and twin parallel earth walls that were probably surmounted by wooden palisades that did not survive. The presence of these ramparts expresses a double concern: first to retain sediments upslope and upstream, avoiding the erosion and redeposition that are induced by heavy monsoon rains (Allen in press), and second to delineate the urban space, delimiting specialized zones (Malakie LaClair 2008). The network of habitations on piles and terraces was dense and characterized by accumulations of terraces and drains. All craft activities (iron, copper-base alloy, and hard stones) expanded both on the tops and bases of the hills, except that the lapidary glass, stone, and glass-bracelet craft centers have been identified exclusively in the lower parts of Valley 1 and along the river. Two clearly defined zones emerge from the spatial analysis: a southern area corresponding to Hills 1 and 2, most likely used by local populations and a few foreign craftspeople, and a northern area, including Hills 3 and 4, occupied by various Asian groups: South Asian, Southeast Asian, and East Asian. The southern area yielded different types of productions related to the South China Sea lexicon: “Sa Huynh-Kalanay” type of ware, glass and stone ornaments. This zone is taken to be the oldest core of the site that later expended to the north. The northern part of the settlement (Hills 3 and 4) yielded evidence for habitation and for different types of craft production associated with various groups from South, Southeast, and East Asia. Some materials were imported; others were locally produced with exogenous or local techniques. Several of these locally made artefacts belong to the sets of items shared amongst communities along the shore of the South China Sea.

Khao Sam Kaeo cosmopolitan configuration is highlighted by the spatial distribution of materials as well as by its monumental constructions. The enclosing walls, moats and water systems were built, transformed and heavily maintained over centuries and thus appear to be the product of what can be regarded as a coherent political agenda that was

implemented over several generations. In conjunction with other lines of evidence, they are indicative of a certain form of perennial centralized power and of a common sense of civic community (Bellina in press; Bellina and Bernard in press). The walls had multiple purposes, i.e. not only acted as a barrier against floods or favoured certain agricultural activities, but also covered a symbolic function, playing a great social and political significance. This multiplicity of functions seems to have often been the case in the early forms of city walls found elsewhere in Asia (Smith 2003; Indrawoath 2004; Moore and Win 2007; Kim et al. 2010; Kim 2013). In a tropical Southeast Asian environment where most remains in urban context are very poorly preserved, enclosures constitute a crucial element for discussing socio-political trajectories. Besides attesting a form of authority able to control considerable labour for their erection and maintenance, they may also have been a means by which this authority could be strengthened. Alternatively, these monuments may have played a significant symbolic role giving a sense of common identity for the community living within its boundaries (Smith 2003; Kim 2013; Bellina in press).

In addition to monumental evidence, socio-political complexity is indicated by the internal organization of the site characterized by socio-professional zones hosting different social groups and activities. The socio-technical system, a reflection of the socioeconomic and political context, is also complex. These industries have set up far-reaching supplying and distribution networks (the glass industry is a good example) and involved foreign specialists often implementing highly skilled techniques to produce hybridized products meeting the different levels of demands. Finally, this trade-oriented polity has proved to have been able to organize the food supply to host full-time specialists in various arts and crafts, be it by importing some of them from a more or less distant hinterland or by supporting an adequate agricultural base at the site and its immediate surroundings (Allen in press; Castillo in press).

The sources of inspiration for the elaboration of the urban space in Southeast Asia constitute a long debated issue. The position currently held by Nam Kim for Co Loa in North Vietnam and by myself for Khao Sam Kaeo suggests a combination of regional developments and external inputs. Both Co Loa and Khao Sam Kaeo represent hybrid

forms of urbanization, the product of multiple, more or less remote sources of inspiration. To be clear, the sources cannot be fully appreciated yet, given the state of research on this topic and the paucity of evidence in the neighbouring Môn region of Central and Lower Myanmar, and in the insular world for this period. However, among the various sources of urban inspiration, both sites seem to owe to the contemporaneous moated settlements that are found in many parts of Mainland Southeast Asia on the one hand and to those settlements belonging to what Kim has termed the “moated-settlement tradition” on the other. In Mainland Southeast Asia, prehistoric moated settlements are found in various regions ranging from Myanmar to Vietnam. Their function and precise dating are often still unclear: were they proto-urban inhabited settlements, or ceremonial centres? In any case, all these sites reflect efforts to control water and hence can be seen as early participants in the process of experimentation that led to the elaborate Southeast Asian traditions of water management that are well-represented, for instance, in the Khmer Empire and the Dvaravati and Pyu cities. Besides this regional source of inspiration I believe that Khao Sam Kaeo may have found inspiration amongst the South Asian enclosed cities that arose during the so-called “second urbanization”, which took place by the early to mid-first millennium BC. Similarities concern morphology, location, size and rampart system. However, comparison cannot be pushed further given the dearth of comparative data on the plan and internal organization of early Indian cities. Khao Sam Kaeo, with its cosmopolitan configuration marked by walled areas, differs in many ways from the known Indian cities; furthermore, the latter were not directly involved with overseas trade. Arikamedu (Begley 1996) and Pattanam (Cherian et al. 2007), being long-distance trade-oriented settlements, would probably provide more pertinent comparisons. However, successive excavations for the former and those currently taking place for the latter have not highlighted any overall city planning. This lack of opportunity to compare trading settlements from the Indian Subcontinent is a considerable handicap in our attempts to reconstruct the history of port-cities at a wider Asian scale.

In Southeast Asia, it is very likely that the current absence of complex walled late prehistoric settlements comparable to those of

Khao Sam Kaeo and of Co Loa reflects more the state of archaeological research than a historical reality. The existence of a commonality of patterns and features in fortified urban settlements across mainland Southeast Asia appears all the more plausible as Chinese texts refer to them in the early centuries AD. On the Thai–Malay Peninsula, Chinese sources describe the existence of several centralized polities. From the sixth century AD, the *Liang Shu* accounts that the capital of the Langkasukha polity located in the Pattani area was fortified and Wheatley (1983) hypothesized the use of “palisaded enceinte with double gates”. Similarly, the capital Simhapura of the Red-Earth Kingdom (probably in the area of Songkhla, a region located about 350 km south of Chumphon) was protected by walls with triple gates. Within this enclosure the palace consisted of storeyed structures (Wheatley 1983, pp. 233–34). In another polity called Buan-Buan located somewhere in the Isthmus of Kra, the Chinese describe maritime people living mostly by the water-side and in default of city walls, depended on palisades. These allusions only provide vague descriptions for these early settlements on the Peninsula; this state of affairs is most regrettable as for this region archaeology fails to provide hard evidence for urbanism in trade-oriented sites before a later period. Other slightly later well-preserved evidence of a major trade-oriented site come from Sungai Batu, Kedah whose industrial, monumental and port structures date back to the third century AD (Chia and Mokhtar 2011). The next chronological example of early historical walled city is Oc-èo pertaining to the Funan polity (first to twelfth centuries AD), which Bourdonneau has reinterpreted as an early trading city displaying Indian influence in its structuring and prefiguring the typical Khmer city model with its geometric cosmological plan (Bourdonneau 2007, pp. 122–23).

One may argue that as early as the late prehistoric period, along with the development of long-distance exchanges, the “moated-settlement tradition” evolved in Mainland Southeast Asia by integrating foreign influences; concomitantly, in maritime Southeast Asia, analogous types of settlements started to display South Asian/Indic urban traits. The overall configuration of Khao Sam Kaeo bears elements heralding those found in much later maritime city-states that thrived along the

fringes of the South China Sea, like Pasai, Banten, Malacca, Ayutthaya, etc. Khao Sam Kaeo shares with these port-cities a cosmopolitan topography marked by walls. As for their internal organization, Reid (1993, pp. 78–79) specifies that historical port-cities all had some “degree of cosmic order at their core, which always risked being completely overwhelmed by the chaotic influx of people attracted at times of prosperity[; ...] only the royal citadel and adjacent public buildings were truly planned, while outside settlements clustered irregularly around markets, waterways, and the compounds of powerful patrons”. Miksic (2000, pp. 118–19), on the other hand, completes this picture adding that in reality, each “heterogenetic” city (trading cities) had a distinct trajectory with unique social, political and economic configurations. These particular configurations specific to each trading polity’s trajectory prevent us from elaborating a narrow definition and leaves room for flexibility. Khao Sam Kaeo is plausibly an early representative example of this tradition of “heterogenetic cities”. Historical accounts cited by Reid (1988, pp. 101–3) suggest that these cities patronized experts in the arts and crafts coming from various regions. Such a situation mirrors what spatial and technological reconstructions evidence at Khao Sam Kaeo. Like in later trading ports, highly specialized industries were attached to compounds, implementing advanced technologies to produce prized products, several of which were part of the symbolic assemblage shared by maritime Southeast Asian elites. The technological reconstruction of these industries, which produced prized objects such as some stone ornaments and specific ceramics, has allowed us to characterize their socio-political environment and their evolution.

4. Maritime Southeast Asian Integrated Sphere: Evidence from Industries

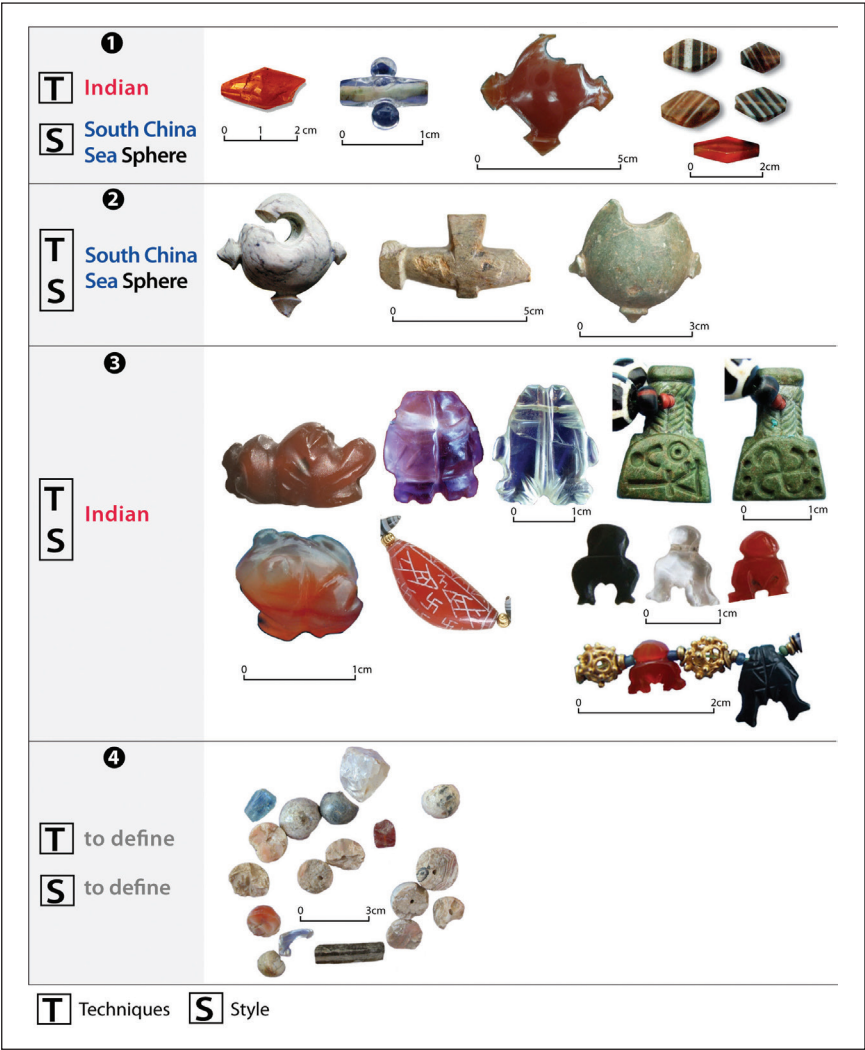
Amongst the set of items shared in maritime Southeast Asia, some circulated prior to the connection with South Asian networks, such as the Dong Son drums from north Vietnam/Southern China (Calo 2014) or the *lingling’o* nephrite artefacts (Hung et al. 2007; Hung and Bellwood 2010) or hard stone ornaments (Bellina 2007); those support

the view of an active and interconnected pre-existing prehistoric exchange network in the South China Sea with shared symbolic and cultural lexicon.

From the connection to South Asian and Chinese networks by the mid-first millennium BC onwards, we find a proliferation of production centres in the Kra Isthmus in the Thai–Malay peninsula. This proliferation is to such an extent that we can virtually talk of an “industrial specialization” of this region. The analysis of the distribution of ornaments crafted in these production centres, such as Khao Sam Kaeo, Phu Khao Thong and Khao Sek, is underway and should eventually allow us to determine whether they were feeding different networks: peer polities and/or hinterland providing the goods needed for export? So far, the analysis of the production at Khao Sam Kaeo provided clues to characterize the types of production and its socio-political context, and to suggest its social destination. Four traditions or groups were identified based on morpho-technological criteria (see Figure 6.1):

1. Group 1 was produced in the southern part of the settlement, and consists of both finished and unfinished products. This type of production, combining Indian raw material, highly skilled Indian technologies implying several years of apprenticeship with South China Sea-related style, is the earliest type I have identified in Southeast Asia, beginning in the fourth century BCE and found in Central Thailand (Ban Don Ta Phet), South Vietnam (Sa Huynh sites) and Palawan in the Philippines (Tabon caves). I have hypothesized that this category of products may have been produced by Indian craftsmen (Bellina 2001, 2003, 2007, 2014).
2. Group 2 consists in artefacts made of nephrite and mica and only includes a small range of shapes: three *lingling’o* comparable to those from Sa Huynh sites in Vietnam such as Giong Ca Vo and Lai Nghi and sites in the Philippines, the bicephalous ornaments (Nguyen 1995; Reinecke and Nguyen 2009) and bracelets (excluding fragments and raw material)—a range reduced still further at Khao Sam Kaeo where most evidence consists only of production evidence and partially worked raw material. Like Group 1, Group 2 is characterized by a type of ornament shared

FIGURE 6.1



The Four Hard Stone Ornaments Groups Identified at Khao Sam Kaeo

Source: Author.

by South China Sea maritime communities but perhaps extending further northeast to include areas stretching to Taiwan (Lan-yu Island southeast of Taiwan). Specimens of this group are mainly found along with production waste on Hills 3 and 4.

3. Group 3 is an Indian-inspired South China Sea type of production, associating Indian-derived morphologies with highly skilled Indian technologies. The group comprises ubiquitous morphologies alongside a wide variety of figurines, some clearly associated with Brahmanical, Buddhist or Jain imagery (at this early period, those cannot be differentiated yet). This group is characterized by a wide range of morphologies inspired by South Asian imagery but developed to an extent not seen elsewhere in South Asia. Group 3 is found amidst other Indian or Indian-inspired materials on Hill 3. Given the expertise implemented in producing artefacts belonging to Group 3, I hypothesize that those were likely made by South Asian artisans or local artisans trained by South Asians. This group was also probably produced at a slightly later stage than Group 1. Even though some figurines belonging to Group 3, amongst which animals such as lions or tigers, tortoises, frogs, fish, etc., cannot be undeniably or uniquely related to Indian imagery, one notes their sudden appearance and diffusion in both South and Southeast Asia during the late centuries BC and early centuries CE. Group 3 was probably aimed at South China Sea network adapting Indian-inspired vocabulary on the site and in other Southeast Asian sites like in Ban Don Ta Phet in Central Thailand. This “Indianized South China Sea repertoire” differs in many respects from what is found in coeval South Asian contexts. Indeed, as noted above, Group 3 associates a vast range of morphologies, some of them very rare or absent in South Asia itself, with production of such a high quality that is infrequent in South Asia.
4. Group 4 can hardly be described in detail as it suffers from the small number of specimens and from a lack of secured context, which was significantly disturbed by looting activities. It is difficult to say whether this type of production results from the transfer of Indian mass-production techniques or if it was inherited from a local tradition exemplified by polished axes occurring frequently in the region. The latter option sounds less plausible as the few beads which I have encountered in the region were made of soft stone or shell. Made on Hill 4 and found amongst

Han material, this lower-quality type of production did not require great skill. It is also the latest group produced on the site since the Han material dates it at best from the late third century AD.

The first three groups have been interpreted as productions made-to-order by artisans patronized by trading elites. Attached specialization involves the manufacturing of restricted goods mostly aimed at elite patron consumption and redistribution through gifts; craftsmen's subsistence was supported partially or wholly by the sponsor. This kind of specialization develops in complex societies and results from the elite's desire to control both the production and the distribution of political currency used for legitimization, alliance-construction strategies and stabilization of authority. Because of the control exerted by the elites and the dependence of the attached specialists on them, the workshops were expected to be found in the vicinity of the elite habitation such as in a major regional centre (Brumfield and Earle 1987). Extrapolating from later historical sources, Khao Sam Kaeo industries with what seems to be made-to-order ornaments production appears to correspond to this model indeed. So far, no production has been recovered outside its boundaries (i.e. walls or embankments). Craft specialists are not dispersed in the region but are concentrated within well-delimited parts of the settlement. Historical accounts show that large cities of the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries AD displayed socio-professional quarters each dedicated to a specialized craftsmanship. This concentration can be explained by the high demand that we would expect in the context of large urban centres, because those were nodes concentrating both local and international trading routes, and also because the wealthiest consumers, the royal courts and the merchants were also found there. Urban production centres continued to display this organization into the nineteenth century in Southeast Asian cities, such as Batavia and Surabaya, where artisans as well as communities of foreign traders continued to live in their specialist quarters or "kampung" (Reid 1988, pp. 101–13). Except perhaps in the case of Group 4, whose destination could not be determined, ornaments produced at Khao Sam Kaeo seem to satisfy specific, well-defined demands for very fine quality, high-skilled materials whose style is specific to a

“South China Sea-network”. Was this demand exclusive for “royal” courts and merchant-aristocrats? If so, were they exerting some sort of control over the production? It is difficult to answer this question with the data at hand. Craft systems’ socio-political environment and their evolution in relation to trade is an under-investigated topic of archaeological research in Southeast Asia, the only exception being the systematic study carried out in the historical chiefdoms of the Philippines by Laura L. Junker (1999). Even for major historical maritime-trading polities such as Śrīvijaya, Champa or Malacca, archaeological data is absent. Allusions to the socioeconomic and political context in which craft specialists operated can be found in much later textual sources or in even more recent ethnographic descriptions. The latter mostly relates to patronized specialists. Ethnohistorical sources and archaeological researches of the political economy of Philippines chiefdoms show that “political currency” was generated through alliance-structures as well as through the sponsorship of artisans specializing in the production of luxury goods. Historical accounts relate how, in the case of such other high-value industries as those of the silversmith and goldsmith, shops were not stocked with ready-made ware. William Dampier (1651–1715) observed that the artisans’ reluctance to accumulate a large stock was explained by the risk of burglary on the one hand, and of using expensive raw materials without a secure commission on the other (Reid 1988, pp. 101–3). This state of affairs may have applied to artisans working other precious materials such as exotic hard stone ornaments. At Khao Sam Kaeo, no stock (of finished products) was recovered or reported neither in or near the workshops, or anywhere on the site. Finished products were found isolated (i.e. not as a group).

How to interpret this commissioned work in socio-political terms? The production system probably contributed to the political legitimization of the trading elite, whether a ruler or a leading class. At Khao Sam Kaeo and most likely also in other port-cities yet to excavate, industrial systems probably participated in stabilizing the political position in relation to three different types of emulation. The first emulation was probably internal and was generated by the diverse

communities or clans of local and foreign traders, craftsmen or religious specialists staying more or less temporarily in port-cities. Those groups were probably well aware of the novelties available in other port-cities and may have put more pressure on the port-city elite to remain up-to-date.

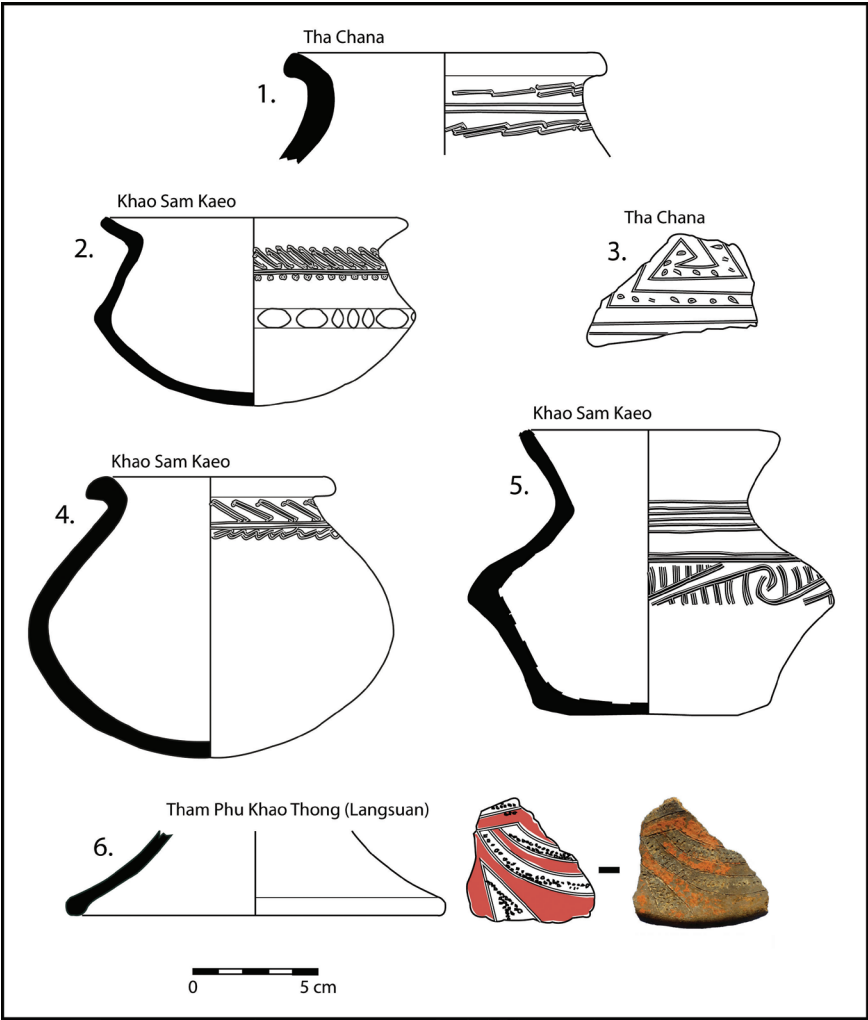
The second emulation came from the need to maintain good relationships with other more volatile societies of different socio-political organization, be they seafaring populations or collectors of raw materials inhabiting the forested interior linked to the port-city—populations with whom they developed inter-dependant relationships. These more volatile societies had to stay in the pyramidal social construction as they were vital for the attractiveness of the trading polity and thus the power of its leader.

The third challenge was probably exerted by other societies of similar rank, such as other coastal trading polities whom they were competing with. I believe that some sort of “jousts of prestige” between trading elites took place in the context of competing trading polities. To what extent did those competitions encouraged excellence by pushing the limits of expertise (technologies)? This emulation through possible contests-like interactions for gaining and maintaining prestige might also have contributed to disseminating technologies, complex knowledge and cultural features amidst coastal urban elites. Such processes could have played a significant role in the transfer of exogenous cultural traits. However, the sequence of cultural exchanges between Indic and South China Sea sphere that this kind of stone ornament production revealed is that exogenous traits were exaggerated, be they technical or iconographic. Competing elites from early trading polities over-emphasized the attributes of “otherness” deemed to be sophisticated. The social identity of trading populations across the South China Sea rested on the sublimation of what seem to be no longer South Asian cultural traits. Paralleling Greek models exaggerated in the Roman world, the “more Indian than Indian” cultural traits were synonym of excellence. The evolution of these industries and the socio-political strategies they served show how the “otherness” was handled in the construction of social identity. Such characteristic in the process of cultural exchange has also been attested in later historical periods in the realm of Khmer

architecture (Dagens 2005, 2009), as well as in urbanism at Oc eo (Bourdonneau 2007) and may thus represent some sort of recurrent pattern throughout the region.

Let us now look briefly at another hybrid industry whose stylistic lexicon is shared by South China Sea networks: the Sa Huynh-Kalanay types of ceramics. What does this industry tell us on the cultural sequence and the socio-political strategies? Aude Favereau (2014, 2015; Favereau and Bellina 2016) carries out a comparative study of Sa Huynh-Kalanay type of ceramics found in the Thai–Malay peninsula and along the shores of the South China Sea. One difficulty arising from its hazy chronological sequence is the lack of absolute dating. Typical of the Metal Age, this complex seems to decline after the early centuries AD in the Peninsula, but its peculiar style may have survived longer in the Philippines (Favereau, personal communication). In the Peninsula, most of these decorated ceramics relate to local technological traditions within which they seem to constantly represent a minority group. Though their decorative repertoire displays an “air de famille”, they also show distinctive traits (see Figure 6.2). These ceramics were found in an urban context in the southern part of Khao Sam Kaeo as well as in Tha Chana, another early trading polity of the Peninsula that have not yet been investigated because of their non-secure context; but they were also found in coastal cave sites as part of mortuary goods such as in Tham Tuay caves and in the recently excavated coastal caves of Phu Khao Thong (Langsuan). Their use was most likely exclusive and served special occasions. Favereau observes their great diversity within the Peninsula. This diversity may indicate a small-scale production that was the result of occasional demand. Favereau’s technological reconstruction led her to conclude that some were locally produced with local techniques, others were locally produced with imported techniques whilst a small group was imported. All display a common style and tend to be sporadic. Who ordered these productions amongst whose producers? Although it is still premature to answer this question at this stage, one may hypothesize that these productions were commissioned to experienced craftsmen possibly staying in commercially active nodes.

FIGURE 6.2



Sa Huynh-type of Ware from the Thai-Malay Peninsula

Source: Drawing and photos by Aude Favereau.

It is also still unclear who the groups that referred to this stylistic repertoire were. Were there natives of the peninsula who adopted a foreign style? Were there also groups coming from the Philippines from where

this style likely originated, or from various regions of the South China Sea? This would conform well with G. Benjamin's (1987) hypothesis. Benjamin argues that the ancient settling in the Kra Isthmus area was the result of sea-going populations intermarrying with local people. These seafarers were interested in trade and in particular in the opportunities offered by trans-peninsular routes. They would have come directly from the Philippines rather than through Indonesia (Benjamin 1987, p. 131) and would have been responsible for the remains of archaic forms of Austronesian lexical elements. Some small-scale Sa Huynh-Kalanay type of productions also found in the funerary site of Ho Diem in Vietnam (Yamagata 2008, 2012), would support this view. These groups may relate to very mobile sea populations that some ethnographic accounts show to have been guardians of sea lanes, collectors of sea products and involved in inter-island trade (Bellina, Epinal, and Favereau 2012). In the Malay context, they were part of the port-cities maritime hinterland, i.e. part of the polity social structure (Andaya 2008).

Within the Peninsula, groups of different socioeconomic structure belonging to different contexts may have referred to this lexicon. It is possible that some of the populations that ordered and used these pots, possibly made by craftsmen working in large settlements, may have been mobile populations living in a symbiotic relationship with complex coastal trading polities. Were those natives of the Peninsula that became economically specialized or were they migrants attracted by trade and the openings of the trans-peninsular routes? Did sea-going elites and port-cities trading elites come to share similar tokens of power? These are questions that further research will hopefully help clarify.

5. Conclusion

The study of settlements and crafts help us formulate the hypothesis of a late prehistoric maritime Southeast Asian integration area where common socio-political practices were elaborated. I believe that the late prehistoric period and the entrance of the region into a wider trans-Asiatic network corresponds to the elaboration of an urban tradition

that prefigures the later port-cities that thrived across the South China Sea. In this urban tradition, the elites may have referred to regional as well as Indian models. They chose to materialize their power with the erection of walls and the construction of quarters to which were attached highly specialized artisans, most likely working under their patronage to produce political currency and means of legitimization. These productions evolved in time, eventually integrating foreign elements that were sublimated and enhanced when deemed to be most sophisticated. A core characteristic of this South China Sea network culture is its capacity to adopt and exaggerate any foreign innovations serving socio-political strategies. This behaviour has been emphasized before by researchers such as Oliver Wolters (1999), thus suggesting a continuity in cultural practices.

Various groups from the Peninsula and the South China Sea (possibly from the Philippines, Indonesia and coastal Vietnam) participated in this network. At that time, some of them may have become assimilated to the maritime world and become socioeconomically specialized. The development of the trans-Asiatic network and of trading nodes that structured it may have opened a range of opportunities for groups to exploit economic niches, whether as guardians of sea lanes, or as gatherers of raw materials, or as traders. To what extent the specialists in those trading cities oriented their production to meet the elites' needs for alliance, thus leading to a harmonization of tastes or codes amongst the various groups involved, is a question future research will hopefully help us to answer.

As a whole, my preliminary research postulates the plausibility of a late prehistoric maritime Southeast Asia integration, where trading nodes would have been cradles for some early socio-political practices that further developed over time. The control by the trading elites of the legitimizing means of production in the landscape or in centres of craftsmanship is at the heart of these socio-political practices.

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7

LOOMS, WEAVING AND THE AUSTRONESIAN EXPANSION¹

*Christopher Buckley*²

1. Introduction

In the last few decades, comparative approaches that map languages and archaeological features over a broad area have contributed significantly to understanding the prehistory of Southeast Asia. In contrast, despite plenty of interest in the material culture of the region, this aspect has been relatively little studied in a comparative or regional sense (but see Blench, this volume). Pioneering work was done in the first half of the

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twentieth century by ethnologists such as Jasper and Pirngadie (1912) and Buhler (1943), who documented the art and material culture of the Indonesian archipelago, and by Pelras (1972) who surveyed Indonesian loom technology and terminology, but this type of work largely halted in the latter part of the twentieth century, when the emphasis shifted to examining individual cultures in depth. There are exceptions to this, such as surveys by Maxwell (1990), Yoshimoto (1987, 2013) and Howard and Howard (2002) and Howard (2010) who explored common themes in weaving-related traditions across the region. Recently, there have been signs that the “comparative project” in material culture in a broad sense is tentatively resuming (see for example the recent exhibition catalogue of Austronesian artifacts edited by Benitez-Johannot [2011]), spurred on by successes in linguistics and archaeology and by the new questions and challenges this work poses.

In this chapter I will review the distributions in Mainland Southeast Asia (MSEA) and Island Southeast Asia (ISEA) of two weaving technologies with ancient roots: the body-tensioned loom and the ikat technique for making decorated textiles. I will attempt to interpret the present-day distributions of these technologies, and the archaeological record (as it relates to yarn production and weaving), in terms of prehistoric dispersals. These prehistoric events have been modulated by processes occurring in the historical past that have altered (but not completely obscured) the underlying patterns. In particular I will compare the looms of the mainland with those of the Austronesian-speaking peoples of ISEA, and discuss the consequences for our understanding of how the Austronesian expansion occurred. I will show that it is difficult to explain the present-day distribution of looms and ikat weaving based on the “out of Taiwan” model that has gained currency in the last two decades. Instead, these characteristically “Austronesian” technologies appear to have originated directly from the Asian mainland.

2. The Significance of Weaving and Textiles

Based on linguistic reconstructions and archaeological evidence, weaving is understood to have been part of the cultural repertoires of Neolithic farming peoples in Europe and in Asia. Weaving cultures that exist today in Asia have both practical and symbolic aspects, and archaeological remains of looms made from precious materials (discussed below) suggest that this has long been the case. The practical aspects are illustrated by

artifacts with a very wide distribution, such as the black tents used by nomadic peoples across much of Central Asia, and the multi-purpose tubeskirt (*sarong*) that is found across much of ISEA and MSEA. To keep this in perspective however, the pre-Neolithic peoples who inhabited Asia over a wide range of latitudes seem to have managed without woven cloth, using only cordage, plaited work and (perhaps) bark cloth.

Studies of textile culture in the ethnographic present show that the significance of woven textiles and the practice of weaving extend beyond fulfilling basic needs, and in some cases the practical aspects of textiles play only a minor role in comparison. Studies of the social and ceremonial roles of Southeast Asian textiles are too numerous to present a thorough review, but Ruth Barnes' 1989 study on the textiles of Lamalera, on the island of Lembata, is a seminal example in the field. In most Southeast Asian cultures decorated textiles are an important class of luxury goods and constitute public markers of status. Connected with this, they play a role in rites of passage, particularly relating to marriage. For example,

FIGURE 7.1



Weaver Agnes Golole and Family, Adatei Region, Lembata, Indonesia, Displaying a Bridewealth Sarong that She Wove Herself

the textile in Figure 7.1, from the Atadei region of Lembata, is a type that is characteristic of formal gift exchange rituals in the islands of East Nusa Tenggara. In basic form it resembles a tubeskirt, though this “skirt” is not wearable, and has no practical value. It is too narrow to fit over the body, and it is left unfinished: the textile is made of bands of woven cloth that are left in their original tubular form exactly as they came off the loom. At more than two metres long it is also much longer than is necessary for a practical tubeskirt. Textiles such as this with uncut warp have ceremonial significance in many parts of Indonesia, as reviewed by Duggan (2015).

An item of this type takes around two to three years for a skilled Atadei weaver to make, and its sole function is as a gift, which will form part of a formalized exchange between the bride’s family and the groom’s family. The weaver of such a cloth is normally an older, married woman who has accumulated enough skill and experience (and has enough spare time, in between farming and other household activities) to make a textile of this type. Families in the Atadei area who need to make a marriage alliance and who lack skilled weavers amongst their household members are obliged to buy several of these cloths at significant outlay: the local price of a well-made bridewealth sarong was the equivalent of US\$500 or more when I last visited this region in 2014. Barnes (1989) described similar marriage gift rituals from the nearby village of Lamalera: sarongs and ivory bracelets pass from the bride’s family to the groom’s family, while elephant tusks are exchanged in the opposite direction. The number, sizes and types of each gift are laid down by tradition.

3. Technique

In a previous study, I investigated the warp ikat tradition in ISEA, and showed, by means of a quantitative study of the distribution of woven motifs, that the ikat traditions of ISEA are related to those of the mainland and have a common origin (Buckley 2012). In the present work I will look primarily at technique rather than motif, and my approach will be based on mapping. It has long been recognized (Bird 1960) that technique is the most conservative part of the weaver’s

repertoire: whereas motif, colour and layout may change from time to time, loom construction and weaving techniques are usually passed from generation to generation with great fidelity. Niessen (2009) adds to this the concept of “tacit knowledge”: actions and procedures that are passed from generation to generation that can only be learned thoroughly by observing and doing. In this respect, textile culture parallels language: both are learned by copying, whether from one’s parents or one’s peers. Some aspects of both, such as clothing style and pronunciation, may change within a lifetime. Lexicon and motifs are more stable, and structural features such as grammar and loom design change at the slowest rates.

“Weaving” is defined, in the most general sense, as interpenetrating flexible materials to make two-dimensional or three-dimensional structures. With materials such as bamboo and palm fibre (used to make mats or baskets) this can be done without a frame, using the natural rigidity of the material. In the case of the soft, flexible yarns used to make textiles, weaving is usually done on a frame (a loom). In most cases this involves mounting a set of yarns (the warp) between two beams (warp beam and cloth beam), then interpenetrating another yarn (the weft) at right angles to it. The simplest interlace, with warps and wefts alternating over and under in strict sequence is called plain weave.

The process of making woven textiles involves interlinked tasks, requiring several domesticated plants and animals:

1. Cultivating a suitable fibre plant or animal
2. Processing the fibre into yarn
3. Preparing dye vats (traditionally using domesticated or semi-domesticated plants as dye sources)
4. Dyeing the yarn (sometimes including ikat resist decoration)
5. Creating the warp and heddle system, generally on a specialized warping frame, and mounting it on the loom
6. Weaving
7. Assembling, finishing, post-decoration (embroidery, appliqué)

The basics of operating a loom can be learned in a matter of a few weeks or months, but acquiring all these steps and carrying them out with a high degree of proficiency usually takes years, sometimes a decade or more.

3.1 Fibres and Processing

Fibres that are indigenous in Asia include silk and bast fibres extracted from plant stems. The latter include hemp (*Cannabis sativa*) in northern areas of the Asian mainland, ramie (*Boehmeria nivea*, a type of nettle) and wisteria vine (*Pueraria thunbergiana*) in central and southern parts of the mainland and Taiwan. Fibres extracted from leaves are important in MSEA and ISEA, including banana fibre (*Musa textilis*), lemba (*Curculiga latifolia*), pineapple and hibiscus.

Evidence of the usage of silk and bast fibres to make textiles has been found in Neolithic archaeological sites on the Asian mainland. Fragments of woven silk textile dating to 4,700 years ago were found in Qianshanying, a Liangzhu culture site in Zhejiang province (Kuhn 1982). Traces of textiles made from bast fibres have been found in burials from the Qijia culture in the Yellow River dating to around 4,000 years ago (Chen Honghai 2013), and a textile fragment made from wisteria, apparently dating to between 5,000 to 6,000 years ago, was found at Caoxieshang in Jiangsu province (Kuhn 1997).

The processing of bast fibres involves cutting the stems or leaves of the plants, allowing them to partially rot in water (retting) then stripping out the long fibres that can be used to make yarn. These can be used directly as long, flat strips, or lightly twisted using a spindle, or (in the case of hemp) the strips can be flayed to break them down further into a mass of fluffy fibres, then spun to make soft yarns similar to cotton. Both “twisting” and “spinning” involve similar-looking spindles, but these processes are conceptually different. Given the variety of methods for making yarn, the absence of spindle-whorls (in the archaeological record, for example) does not necessarily imply the absence of yarn for weaving: for example, abaca fibres used in the southern Philippines are processed into yarn and woven into cloth without any spinning or twisting. Ramie is normally twisted into yarn, but may also be used as flat, untwisted strips on occasions.

Bast fibres have been in steady retreat in the region since the introduction of cotton cultivation from the tenth century onwards (Baker-Brite and Marston 2013), but hemp and ramie continued to be used in the upland areas of Southwest China until recent decades. In Japan, where cotton arrived relatively late and remained an expensive luxury until the nineteenth century, various bast fibres including wisteria vine

and elm fibre were used well into the twentieth century. Other types of bast fibre and palm leaf fibres were important on Hainan Island, and in East Nusa Tenggara until the mid-twentieth century. The cultivation and processing of bast fibres has been gradually replaced by cotton, which has spread from west to east together with its characteristic associated tools, the cotton gin and the spinning wheel. These often bear local names derived from Indian terms (*karpasa*: “cotton”, *charkha*: “spinning wheel”).

As with yarn fibre, dyes are obtained mainly from cultivated plants (and a scale insect, in the case of purplish-red lac dyes from the Himalayan foothills), with local variation depending on the plants available and the climate. Within this variation, there are three classes of dye that are particularly important and widespread in the region: indigo blues, reds from morinda root (*Morinda citrifolia*) and black/brown dyes derived from the combination of tannins from bark and iron obtained from paddy field mud. The chemistry of these dyes and the procedures required to obtain deep shades on cellulose fibres (such as bast fibres and cotton) are complex, time consuming, and involve secrecy and ritual. An Atadei weaver, dyeing yarn with morinda root for the type of bridewealth sarong mentioned, above may repeat a cycle of mordanting and dyeing twenty or more times over a period of one to two years, on a single set of yarns. She does this in order to obtain the particular shade of deep red required by tradition. When interviewing weavers in this area it is not uncommon to be shown partly dyed yarns that weavers have been working on intermittently for a decade or more.

3.2 The Ikat Process

The ikat technique is a compression-resist (“tie-dye”) technique for applying decoration to a cloth. It is unique amongst such techniques in that the decoration is applied to the warp or weft yarns (occasionally both) before the cloth is woven. This is done by tying strips of palm leaf (or, in recent times, strips of plastic) tightly around the yarn before it is dyed (see Figures 7.2 and 7.3). This may be done once to produce white designs on a coloured background, or it may be repeated with several dyeing steps to make designs with several colours. After weaving, the design appears in the finished cloth as motifs with characteristically soft outlines (see Figures 7.4 and 7.5).

FIGURE 7.2

Making Ikat: Adding Resist Ties to Warp Yarn Stretched on a Frame, Prior to Dyeing, Pantar, Indonesia

FIGURE 7.3

Making Ikat: Partly Dyed Warps with Resists Attached to Them, Pulau Buayah, Indonesia

FIGURE 7.4

**Ikat Tubeskirt, Pantar, Indonesia**

At one time the tubeskirt was the sole item of clothing for many Indonesians in the remoter islands, most tubeskirts in this region being large enough to cover the entire body. Today it is generally worn with a blouse or jacket.

FIGURE 7.5

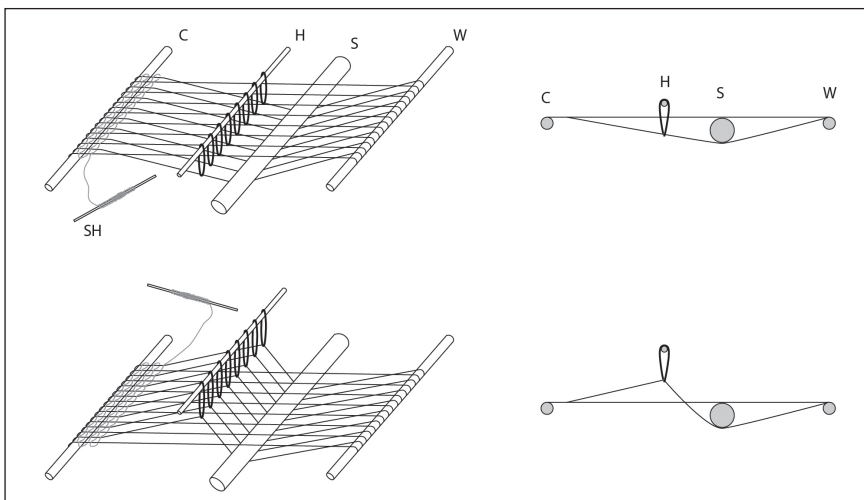
**Ikat Tubeskirt (53 cm × 103 cm)
made by Meifu Li People,
Hainan Island**

3.3 The Loom: Some Basics and Terminology

The simplest way to make a textile is to stretch a warp on a frame and use a needle, made of bone or wood, to insert the weft, going under and over the warps one by one, back and forth. This is probably the way the first textiles were made, and variations on this technique are still occasionally used for making small items such as belts. A more efficient method is to divide the warp windings into two groups (“even numbered” and “odd numbered”) and to raise one group or the other all at once using a bar or a heddle. Weft can then be inserted between them in one “throw”, and weaving proceeds more quickly.

One opening in the warp (called a “shed” in weaving terminology) can be saved and used repeatedly by putting a bar, such as a bamboo rod (“shed stick”), through it. An opening in which the even numbered warps are above the odd numbered ones is called the “natural shed”. The other shed that is needed for weaving is the reverse of this (odd above even), called the “counter-shed”. The odd warps must be pulled through the even warps to switch between these sheds, so adding a second bar is of no help. Instead a heddle system is used. This consists of loops of cord attached to the odd numbered warps. The loops are normally secured on a rod that acts as a handle. When the rod is pulled up the odd numbered warps pass through the even warps and the counter-shed is opened for weft insertion. Pulling down on the shed stick restores the natural shed for another weft insertion and the weaving process continues in this manner (see Figure 7.6). I will refer to the complete system of cord loops and rod as a “heddle”, for simplicity.

FIGURE 7.6



Schematic Drawings of the Weaving Process on a Loom with the Warp Equipped with a Cloth Beam (C), Warp Beam (W), Heddle (H) and Shed Stick (S)

Weft is inserted using a shuttle (SH), passed alternately through openings in the warp with the heddle lowered, called the natural shed (top) and with the heddle raised, called the counter-shed (bottom).

The heddle is a fundamental and non-obvious invention: weavers in the Americas (for example) appear to have made textiles for thousands of years before acquiring it (Bird 1979). It is used in looms worldwide and has probably been invented more than once in different locations. The shed-stick plus heddle combination is one of the most basic arrangements for a workable loom and it forms part of many Asian body-tensioned looms. More complex looms (of more recent development) employ a pair of heddles worked by treadles.

3.4 Body-tensioned Looms

The looms I will be mainly concerned with here are the most basic kinds: body-tensioned looms in which the cloth beam is attached to the weaver's waist via a strap or a wooden yoke. These looms are also called back-tensioned or back-strap looms. Body-tensioning works well with the shed-stick plus heddle system, because it allows the weaver to adjust the tension in the warp by leaning forwards or backwards, which makes it easier to open the shed and counter-shed for weft insertion. These simple looms are used by weavers seated at ground-level, and they lack frames with raised seats that are present in more complex looms, though they may include wooden supports for the warp beam.

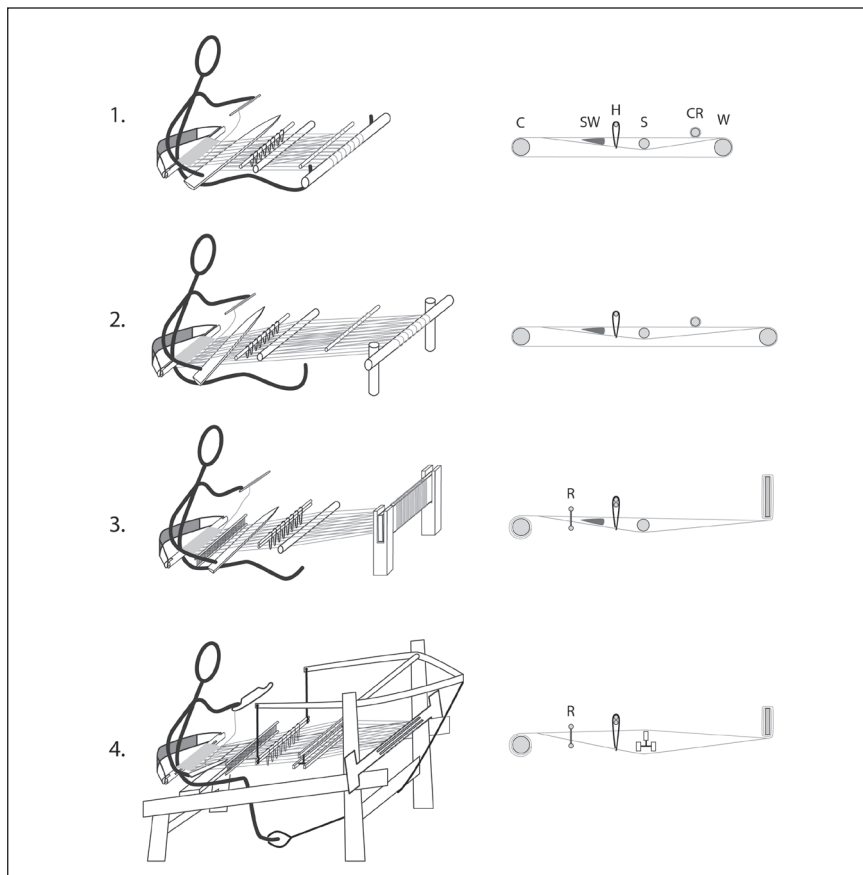
Aside from the warp beam, cloth beam and heddle, the other tool that is found on nearly all of these simple looms is a weft beater ("sword"). Typically this is a long hardwood batten, which is used to beat down the weft after it has been inserted, to make a tightly woven textile.

The body-tensioned loom is used in Asia, Madagascar and parts of central and South America. Entirely different looms are used in Europe, Central Asia and most of Africa, where the most ancient kinds seem to be the warp-weighted loom (Hoffmann 1964), and a loom that is fixed to the ground with four stakes with the heddle supported on a trestle. The Malagasy body-tensioned loom seems to have been carried there by Austronesian-speaking migrants. In the case of the body-tensioned looms in the Americas there is no direct evidence that it was brought by Austronesians, but a link with Asia is nevertheless possible. I will return to this question later in this chapter.

3.5 Classifying Body-tensioned Looms

Body-tensioned looms can be divided into two kinds, those with circular warps and those with flat warps (Gittinger 1979, 1985; Bolland 1979).³ These differ in the way in which the warp is mounted on the loom (see Figure 7.7):

FIGURE 7.7



Schematic Drawings of Four Major Types of Body-Tensioned Loom

1. Foot-braced loom with circular warp; 2. Externally-braced loom with circular warp; 3. Externally-braced loom with flat warp and reed; 4. Frame loom with flat warp and reed.

³ Gittinger (1979) lists five types of body-tensioned looms, but provides only three categories (A, B, C) for these five types, and groups foot braced and externally braced looms with a circular warp into one category (A). I have not used her classification system here because the distinction between the foot braced and externally braced forms is critical to the arguments in this chapter.

Looms with a circular warp

In this type of loom the continuous, spiral-wound warp is mounted on the loom in the form of a “tube” (sometimes referred to as a “ring warp”). The finished cloth is also in the form of a tube when it comes off the loom, until it is cut. As the weaving advances, the weaver shifts the cloth around to keep the leading edge at the cloth beam, by her waist.

All Asian looms with circular warps are body-tensioned, and they can be further sub-divided into two kinds:

1. Foot-braced: the warp beam is braced with the feet⁴
2. Externally braced: the warp beam is attached to an external point, such as the side of a house, or lodged behind two stakes in the ground.

Most looms of this type include a device to maintain the warp yarns in the correct order, a necessary feature for a loom that will be rolled up at the end of the day and unrolled again later, with consequent opportunities for tangling the warps. One such device is the coil rod (Bolland 1979), a rod around which the warps are tightly wound and secured (with a warp crossing). In some looms this is replaced by a pair of sticks (called lease rods or laze rods) bound together and enclosing a warp crossing. These devices also help to keep the warp yarns evenly spaced on the loom.

A slightly more complicated variant of the circular warp called “false circular” warping or “warp lock” is occasionally found in Asian body-tensioned looms (see discussion on South American looms, below). There are also a few instances where a reed (next section) is used on looms with a circular warp, though this is uncommon, perhaps because

⁴ Both Vollmer (1979) and Gittinger (1979) state that weavers using a foot braced back tensioned loom are restricted to weaving cloth of a length that is twice the length of the weaver’s legs. This assertion has been repeated in numerous subsequent publications. If it were true, this type of loom might have had a much shorter history. In fact, longer cloths are routinely woven on foot-braced looms by winding the warp or woven cloth onto the cloth beam, as can be seen in Figures 7.14–7.16. In the case of Hainan Li weavers it is not uncommon for them to weave strips that are twice as long using this method, and I have seen cloths up to three metres long on foot-braced looms in Hainan. Weavers using externally braced back tensioned looms may also wind a few turns of cloth onto the cloth beam, but in this case the main purpose is to hold the cloth more securely.

of the difficulty of threading a circular warp through the openings in a reed.

3.6 Looms with a Flat Warp

In this type, though the warp is spiral-wound as before, it is mounted on the loom as a flat sheet. It is wound onto the warp beam at the beginning, and gradually unrolled as the weaving progresses. At the same time the weaver rolls the woven cloth onto the cloth beam. Instead of the coil rod found on looms with a circular warp, this type of loom usually has a reed to maintain warp ordering and spacing: this is a comb-like device in which each warp (or pair of warps) passes through a separate slot in the reed (Gittinger 1979). In some looms the reed may be also used as a weft-beater instead of a weaver's sword. There are three types of body-tensioned looms that use this system:

1. Externally-braced body tensioned looms: the weaver sits on or near the ground, the warp beam is lodged in slots in two uprights;
2. Frame looms with body tensioning: these looms have a rigid frame, with a raised seat for the weaver;
3. Frame looms without body tensioning.

The third category consists mainly of looms of relatively recent origin in which both the cloth beam and warp beam are fixed to the loom frame, with no body tensioning, such as the ATBM loom that the Indonesian government has supplied to rural weavers in recent decades. These looms are now found in most parts of Asia and they are gradually replacing more traditional forms.

Thus far I have summarized the background to weaving, its importance and some key technical aspects. I will now move on to consider the distribution of techniques and textiles in the Asian region, reviewing the archaeological data first, then the present-day distribution of loom types.

4. Archaeological Evidence for Weaving

A small but important group of archaeological finds give clues to the early development of the loom.

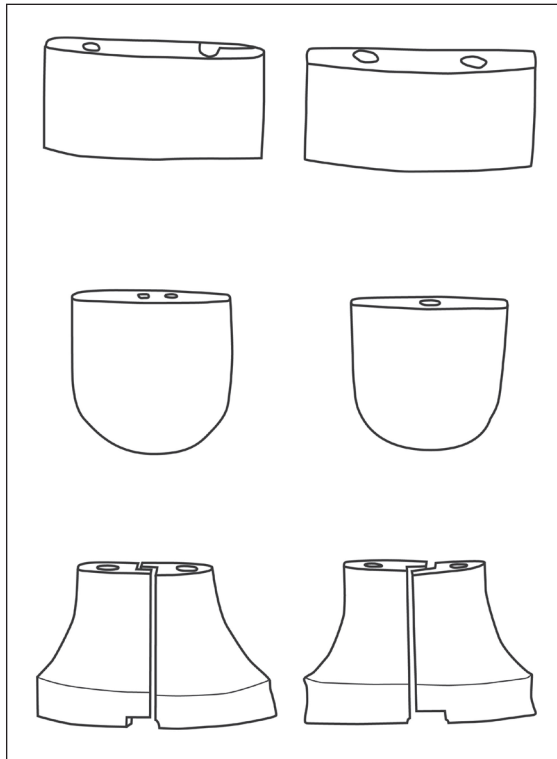
4.1 *Hemudu*

The oldest known remains of textile-making equipment in Asia are fragments recovered from Hemudu, an archaeological site in present-day Zhejiang province on the southeast coast of China. This site was a hut settlement, and dated to between 7,000 and 6,500 years ago. Excavated remains reveal that the inhabitants of Hemudu cooked and stored rice, and made pottery and stone tools. Hemudu is remarkable for the preservation of bone and wood implements, an extremely rare occurrence in sites of this age. These include a number of implements that may relate to weaving, including flat wooden blades that might have been used as weft-beaters, pointed sticks, bone needles and hooks of various kinds. These have generally been interpreted as loom components, with various reconstructions as a foot-braced back-strap loom (Chen Weiji 1992, pp. 32–33) and as a frame loom (Peng Hao 2012, p. 74, citing work by Song Zhaolin and Mou Yonghang).

In my view the Hemudu remains are not the remains of a single loom, but represent several different textile-related processes, probably including net making as well as weaving. Two of the flat-bladed implements from Hemudu look like weft-beaters, and a long pointed implement may be a weft-opening aid (“pick-up stick”). It seems likely that some kind of loom was in use at Hemudu, and a simple back-tensioned loom is the most probable type, but there is not enough evidence to be certain about its form.

4.2 *Yuhang*

Clearer evidence of a back-tensioned loom comes from a tomb from the Liangzhu culture, dating from around 5,000 to 4,000 years ago, from Yuhang, which is part of the present day suburbs of Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. The remains consist of a striking set of decorative jade finials that seem to have been attached to wooden loom parts (see Figure 7.8). The wooden parts have decayed, but it is possible to reconstruct their profiles from the jade end-pieces. Two pairs of jade pieces belonged to rods that fitted together to form a clamp: this appears to be the cloth beam of a backstrap loom. Zhao Feng (2005) presents a reconstruction of these parts as a backstrap loom consisting of cloth beam, warp beam

FIGURE 7.8

Drawings of Jade Finials from a Loom Recovered from a Liangzhu Culture Tomb at Yuhang, Zhejiang Province

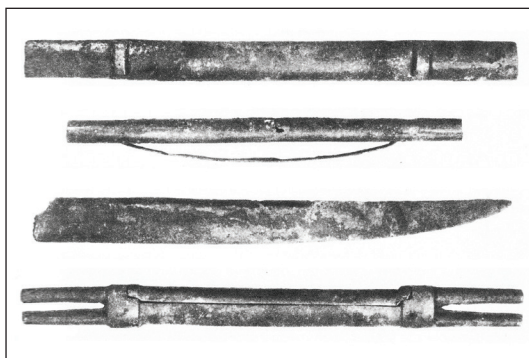
Top: warp beam; middle: weft beater; bottom: cloth beam in two parts, for clamping warp during weaving. Holes in the cloth beam finials indicate where rods were inserted to hold a back-strap.

and weft beater, and describes it as a foot braced backstrap loom. The relatively small size and flattened profile of the warp beam (suitable for bracing the feet against) and its rounded ends, which make it unlikely that it fitted into any kind of frame, make this the most likely reconstruction. Looms are usually made from humble materials, so the use of jade for the end-pieces suggests that the loom and the activity of weaving had particular significance for its owner.

4.3 Shizhaishan

Similar loom parts of more recent date were found in a tomb from the Dian culture (around 400BCE to 100CE) from Shizhaishan, situated in what is now Yunnan province. The Dian may have been related to present-day Daic (Tai-Kadai) speakers who now inhabit this region. Dian artifacts have a distinctive aesthetic with similarities both to contemporaneous Bronze Age cultures in northern Vietnam and in Han dynasty China. The weaving-related remains consist of a well-made and well-preserved set of back-tensioned loom parts made of bronze (Vollmer 1977, 1979), and a bronze cowrie shell container (see Figures 7.9 and 7.10). The loom parts were carefully made and the loom seems functional. The container has on its lid a tableau of weavers using foot-braced backstrap looms, seated around a person who appears to be an overseer, perhaps the occupant of the tomb, who is seated on an elevated platform. Several other containers are known from the same region with similar scenes of weaving using foot-braced back-tensioned looms. Similar loom parts to the Shizhaishan finds have also been found in

FIGURE 7.9



Bronze Loom Parts from Shizhaishan (Tomb 17), Dian Period, Yunnan Province

From the top: warp beam, shed stick (with bar to prevent it sliding out of the warp), weft beater, cloth beam in two parts, used to clamp the warp, with attachment points for a back-strap. The warp beam is approximately 45 cm long.

Source: Vollmer (1979).

FIGURE 7.10



Weavers using Foot-Braced Back-Tensioned Looms, from the Lid of a Bronze Cowrie Shell Container from Shizhaishan (Tomb 1), Dian Culture, Yunnan Province

Source: Vollmer (1979).

burial contexts in northern Vietnam from approximately the same period (Cameron 2011).

As Vollmer points out, the Shizhaishan loom is essentially indistinguishable from foot-braced backstrap looms still in use in Taiwan today, and is similar to foot-braced looms used in Hainan Island as well. As with the Liangzhu remains, the use of precious materials is evidence not only that the foot-braced backstrap loom was in use but also that the loom and weaving was of importance in Dian culture.

The Yunnan and northern Vietnamese remains show that the foot-braced loom was in use in parts of the Asian mainland from which it has vanished today. However in terms of the overall development of weaving these remains are of a relatively late date and correspond to a technology that was already marginalized and in the process of being replaced by more sophisticated devices. There is evidence of the use of a frame loom in China in the Eastern Zhou period (770–221BCE), based on finds from tombs in Lizhou'ao and Guixiya in Jiangxi province, described by Zhao Feng (2012). Both Cameron and Zhao Feng identify

these archaeological remains as frameless back-tensioned looms; in my view the components correspond to a more advanced type. Though incomplete, the loom parts include paddle-shaped warp beams, cloth beams with characteristic forked ends, presumably for attaching a backstrap, and what appear to be weft beaters. These loom parts, particularly the distinctive warp beams, are similar to a loom with a complex frame that is still in use today across much of the Asian mainland (see Figure 7.4). The “paddles” lodge the warp beam behind uprights in the frame and prevent it rotating, while still permitting it to be removed and rolled up at the end of the day in the same manner as other back-tensioned looms. This type of loom is still used today by Miao weavers in Guizhou, Chinese-speaking weavers in southern China and weavers in Korea and Japan (see Figure 7.11). In many cases it is associated with the weaving of cloth made from ramie and hemp.

FIGURE 7.11



A Miao Weaver Setting Up a Body-Tensioned Frame Loom in Shimen, Guizhou Province Dian Culture, Yunnan Province

The loom lacks the horizontal members connecting the frame to the seat that most looms of this type possess. Note the paddle-shaped warp beam (behind the frame, on the left in the photo). This type of loom is shown schematically in Figure 7.4.

By the Han dynasty, at roughly the same period as the remains of ground-level back-tensioned looms from Shizhaishan and northern Vietnam, looms with frames seem to have been widely used in central China in domestic settings, since they are depicted in numerous tomb engravings from this period (Boudot and Buckley 2015).

To summarize, the archaeological remains show that the ground-level back-tensioned loom was known as early as the Neolithic period, and it was formerly present as far as the east coast of China, an area where it is absent today. The earliest type seems to be the foot-braced form. The process of replacement of these looms on the mainland by looms with frames began around 2,500 years ago, and was well advanced in central China by the Han dynasty.

4.4 Early Evidence of Weaving in ISEA

The single piece of evidence for weaving in ISEA in the prehistoric period is a famous bronze sculpture of a weaver using a foot-braced loom (Adams 1977). This sculpture, dated to around the sixth century AD, was kept as an heirloom by a family on the Indonesian island of Flores, and is now in the Australian National Museum. Its origin is unknown. It shows that this type of loom was known in ISEA in the early historical period, though the near-complete absence of the foot-braced type today suggests that it was never widespread in this region.

4.5 Spindle Whorls

Aside from archaeological evidence of looms themselves, the other form of evidence for yarn production (and, indirectly, for weaving) is the presence of spindle whorls. Pottery whorls are found extensively in the archaeological record of China and MSEA, as described by Kuhn (1998) and Cameron (2011, 2013). The spindle whorl first appears in the archaeological record of central China around the same time as domesticated crops. Several types are present at Hemudu, and it is present in most Neolithic archaeological sites on the coast of southeast China.

Amongst the various kinds of spindle whorl, a distinctive biconical type is present in sites in southern China and seems to be associated with the coastal region. Cameron (2011, 2013) has mapped the distribution

and apparent spread of this type from the mainland to Taiwan and the Philippines: the earliest known example of this type comes from the Tianluoshan site in Zhejiang province (7,000 to 4,500 years ago). It appears in northern Vietnam in sites attributed to Phùng Nguyên culture (4,000 to 3,500 years ago), around the same time that rice cultivation first appears in that region. In Taiwan, spindle whorls are absent from the earliest Neolithic remains at Tapenkeng in the north of the island, but biconical and conical whorls appear in other sites (Yuanshan, Peinan) from about 4,500 years ago onwards. Similar biconical whorls have been found in smaller numbers in archaeological sites in the northern part of the Philippines (Cameron 2013). The spindle whorl is rare or absent in the archaeological record of ISEA south of this region.

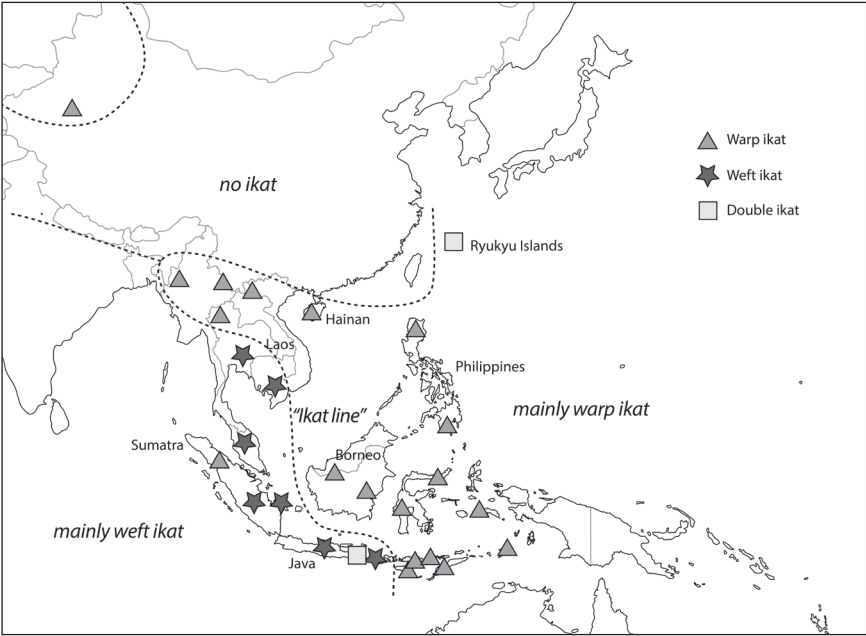
As noted, the dates for the appearance of spindle whorls in archaeological sites show a progressive movement from central China to coastal regions, and thence to MSEA and Taiwan and the northern Philippines. The absence of pottery spindle whorls south of Luzon suggests a change in textile processing occurred after this point. This may have been, in part at least, a consequence of a shift in the type of fibres processed by early settlers, for example from ramie and other bast fibres (which require spinning or twisting) in Taiwan, to banana and other leaf-based fibres in the southern Philippines (which do not). It might also be linked to changes in the materials from which spindle whorls were made. Present-day weavers in ISEA use wooden spindles to spin or twist both bast fibres and cotton: in most cases these materials leave no trace in the archaeological record, particularly in the tropics.

In sum, the archaeological record of spindle whorls shows clear evidence of links between mainland traditions, Taiwan and the northern Philippines between 5,000 and 3,500 years ago. The evidence does not support a smooth or continuous transfer of yarn spinning techniques further south into ISEA.

5. Present-day Distributions of Looms and Ikat

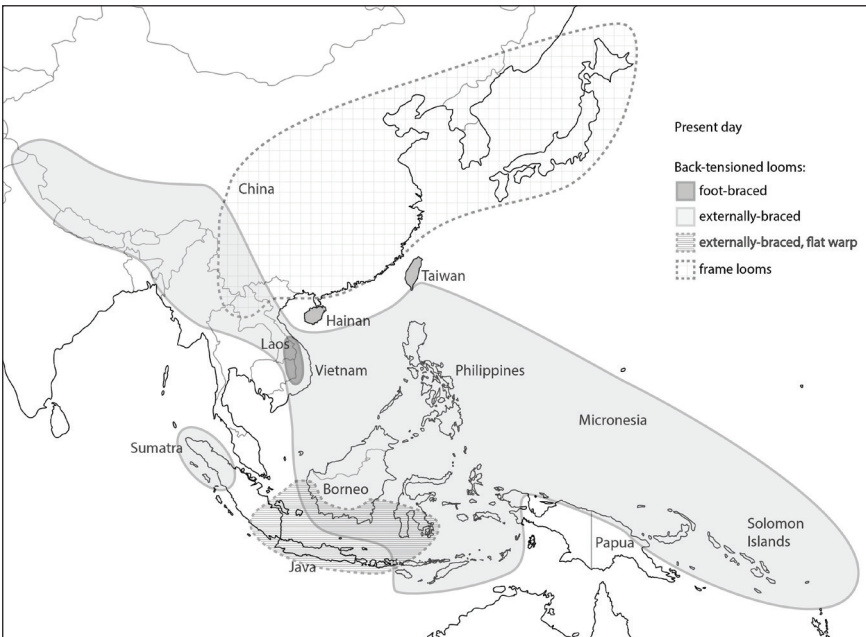
The geographic ranges of the ikat technique and the four loom types of body-tensioned loom are shown in the maps in Figures 7.12 and 7.13.

FIGURE 7.12



Present-day Distribution of Ikat Weaving in Asia

FIGURE 7.13



Present-day Distribution of Body-Tensioned Looms in Asia

Ikat making is present over a wide area of ISEA and MSEA, where it is associated mainly with Daic and Austronesian speakers. It is notably absent from Taiwan, and it is not found in China, aside from the Hlai (=Li, Daic speakers) of Hainan island, where it is an important part of their repertoire. In MSEA it is also made by Wa people (Austroasiatic speakers) near the China–Myanmar border and the Karen and Chin (Tibeto-Burman speakers) in Thailand and Myanmar. Warp ikat is also made by Uighur weavers in Xinjiang; this is the eastern extension of a central Asian tradition which is quite different in character to other Asian weaving, both in terms of looms and decorative tradition.

In the eastern part of ISEA (Wallacea) ikat decoration is mainly applied to the warp, which is usually cotton or bast fibre. In the west (Java, Sumatra, Malaysia, Cambodia, southern Thailand) it is mainly done on the weft, on both silk and cotton. These represent two very different styles of weaving, and they are associated with different cultural traditions. I will return to discussion of the weft-based style in the western region later in this chapter, since it mainly concerns developments that took place in the historical period.

Ground-level back-tensioned looms are also used across large parts of ISEA and mainland SEA, extending along the Himalayas as far west as northern India, where they are used by Tibetan, Naga and Kiranti peoples, and several other Tibeto-Burman speaking groups in the Himalayan foothills. The most widespread type today is the variant with a warp beam fixed to an external point.

The foot-braced form is the principal loom in three localized areas: Taiwan (Formosan-speaking weavers), Hainan (Li), and the border between southern Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam (several groups of Austroasiatic speakers including Katu, Mnong and Maa) (see Figures 7.14–7.16). Foot-braced looms are occasionally found amongst Tibetan and Naga weavers in the Himalayan foothills, and amongst Austronesian-speaking weavers in northern Irian Jaya (Yoshimoto 1991, citing Goslings 1928–29), however in these cases the foot-braced looms are rather basic in form, and are used occasionally rather than as the main type of weaving loom.

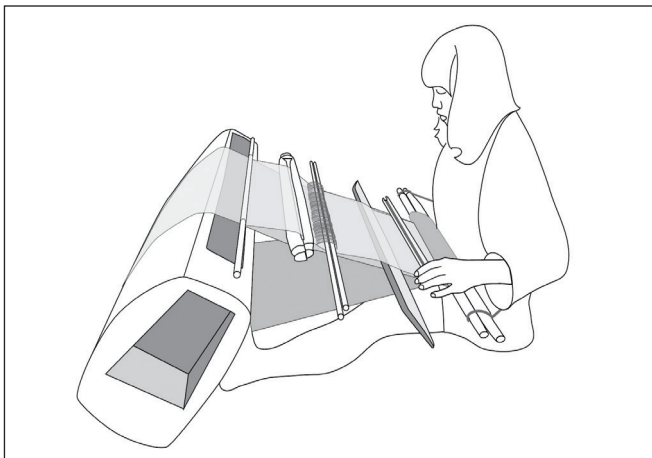
FIGURE 7.14**Atayal Weaver from Taiwan, using a Foot-Braced Loom****FIGURE 7.15****Meifu Li Weaver from Hainan, Weaving Cloth Decorated with Warp Ikat on a Foot-Braced Loom**

FIGURE 7.16



Weaver from Southern Laos (probably Katu), using a Foot-Braced Loom

5.1 The Warp-based Tradition

Comparing the distribution of looms with that of ikat weaving, there is a clear association between the two. Warp ikat is exclusively made on back-tensioned looms with circular warps (except Xinjiang). The range of warp ikat also corresponds roughly to the range of the loom, though the range of the circular warp loom is somewhat broader. The looms used are all rather uniform in design, to the extent that the loom used by Karen weavers in Thailand (for example) looks little different to that used by Indonesian weavers in the islands of East Nusa Tenggara (see Figure 7.17), and operates in exactly the same way.

Though this chapter focuses on the loom and warp ikat, these features are markers for a broader textile-related complex, which I will call the warp-based tradition. Its characteristic features are the use of bast fibres, warp-based decoration, warp ikat, the back-tensioned loom, the wearing of tubeskirts (worn by both men and women), blankets and loincloths

FIGURE 7.17



Weaver in the Atadei Region of Lembata, Indonesia, using an Externally-Braced Loom

(mainly used by men), baby-carriers in the form of slings, and head-cloths.⁵ This complex is rarely found in a “complete” form and is often modified by more recently acquired customs, for example by the wearing of jackets inspired by styles from mainland China, and the use of cotton from India (now nearly universal) but its main features can usually still be recognized, particularly in remoter areas.

The features of the warp-based tradition are closely linked with the technical characteristics of back-tensioned looms with circular warps. The cloth woven on these looms is naturally warp-faced, meaning that the warp is prominent in the finished textile, the weft being largely concealed. Most decoration therefore utilizes the warp, including warp ikat and warp patterning (weaving with warp yarns in contrasting colours and using

⁵ The main features of this tradition have been described by Maxwell (1990, pp. 66–75), and by Gittinger and Leedom-Lefferts (1992, pp. 29–47)..

these to produce designs). Patterning on the weft is sometimes present as well, but in this case special techniques such as weft-wrapping must be used in order to make it visible in the finished cloth.

5.2 The Weft-based Tradition

Similarly, the making of weft ikat is associated with a distinct textile complex, which I will call the weft-based tradition. This is characterized by the use of looms with flat warps and reeds. The primary fibres are silk (particularly for prestige textiles) and cotton. Just as the loom with a circular warp determines the type of cloth that can be woven, the loom with a flat warp and reed has a distinct influence on the finished textile. The reed introduces a wider spacing between the warps, making the weft more prominent. This makes decoration on the weft, including supplementary weft and weft ikat, a natural choice when weaving with this type of loom. As noted, the weft-based tradition is found mainly in the western part of the region, where it is associated with the former domains of the Indian-influenced kingdoms, including the Dvaravati, Champa, Angkor, Srivijaya and Majapahit kingdoms (discussed in more detail below). The dividing line between the two traditions is a boundary that I call the “Ikat line” (see Figure 7.12).

Aside from the technical differences, these two traditions employ different decorative layouts on cloth. Warp-based cloths are mostly based upon repeated elements arranged hierarchically, with major bands of motifs, subsidiary bands and dots/dashes, divided up by warp stripes. Motifs are made up of small dots or dashes, which are often visible within the outlines of the design. Decorative layout on the textile surface tends to be “fractal” in conception, repeating similar themes at various scales, with motifs sometimes nested within each other. Borders, if present, are informal, and the edges of cloth are populated with similar motifs to the centres. There is a great deal of flexibility in layout (see Figures 7.4, 7.5, 7.18, 7.19, 7.20). This contrasts with the organization of cloths of the weft-based tradition, which are formal in conception and based around “frames”. The frame is composed of borders and a central area, each of which is filled with different motifs, often including a row of elongated triangles at each end of the cloth. The central field is usually

FIGURE 7.18



Tubeskirt (70 cm × 158 cm) Woven from Cotton and Decorated with Warp Ikat, Rongkong Area, Central Sulawesi

FIGURE 7.19



Man's Cloth (*beti*, 104 cm × 167 cm), made of Cotton and Decorated with Warp Ikat and Warp Stripes, Insana Region, Timor, Indonesia

FIGURE 7.20



Detail of Figure 7.19, Showing Hierarchical Arrangement of Ikat Motifs

filled with a regular motif that repeats along the vertical and horizontal axes (see Figures 7.21 and 7.22). This format is derived from Indian decorative styles, such as *patola* (double ikat cloths) imported from Gujarat (see Figure 7.23).

In summary, a distinctive complex of technique and textiles, the warp-based tradition, is distributed over a wide area of eastern ISEA and parts of the Asian mainland. In its most characteristic form it includes the externally-braced form of the body-tensioned loom with a circular warp, and the warp ikat technique. It is particularly associated with Austronesian speakers in ISEA, but it is notably absent in Taiwan. In a few places (Taiwan, Hainan, Laos–Vietnam) an older foot-braced form of the loom survives. In western parts of ISEA there is a different tradition, with looms with reeds and flat warps, and textiles oriented towards decoration on the weft.

Before attempting to account for this distribution, I will review a further important source of information: linguistic evidence.

FIGURE 7.21



Large Ceremonial Cloth (86 cm × 208 cm)
Woven from Silk, Decorated with Weft Ikat
(central field) and Gold Supplementary
Weft (*songket*) in the Borders. Found on
Bali, possibly woven in the Palembang Area
of Southern Sumatra

FIGURE 7.22



Detail of Figure 7.21

FIGURE 7.22



A *Patola* (92 cm × 400 cm,
detail), Woven from Silk
with Double Ikat (warp
and weft ikat). Made in
Gujarat for the Indonesian
Market, Nineteenth
Century

6. Linguistic Evidence Relating to the Spread of Weaving in ISEA

Aside from the evidence from spindle whorls, the main evidence for the presence of weaving amongst the earliest Austronesian migrants into ISEA is linguistic. A notable early attempt to use weaving terminology in a systematic way to trace connections between Indonesian traditions was made by Christian Pelras, who identified and mapped cognates for weaving (*tenun*), a weaver's sword beater (*balira* and its variants), the heddle (*gun* and *karap* and their variants) and the cloth beam (*apit* and variants) (Pelras 1972).⁶ My discussion here is based on the more recent and comprehensive analysis by Blust (2014), in particular on his reconstruction of proto-Austronesian (pAn). This represents the vocabulary of the earliest Austronesians, while the vocabulary of the first Austronesian migrants is captured by reconstructed proto-Malayo-Polynesian (pMP).

Blust deduces four terms in pAn that relate specifically to weaving, as well as four related to yarn and cord production, two related to mats and baskets and five related to clothing (see Table 7.1). The reconstructed pMP vocabulary adds several more terms related to mats, perhaps reflecting the increased importance of this craft as the early Austronesian settlers moved south into environments with abundant raw materials for this craft.

⁶ I would like to thank Bernard Sellato for drawing my attention to Pelras' 1972 paper on Indonesian weaving technology and terminology. Pelras employed the same technique that I have used in this study: plotting distributions on a map. In his paper he identified three main types of looms, which he called the "oriental", "central" and "occidental" types. His "oriental" loom corresponds to my "looms with a circular warp" and he speculated that this may be the earliest type. His "central" loom corresponds to my "looms with a flat warp" and the "occidental" type is the frame loom with two foot-treadles, which he regarded (correctly, in my view) as a relatively recent arrival in the region. At the time he wrote his paper Pelras did not have the benefit of current insights into Austronesian migrations: had he done so he would undoubtedly have been able to carry his conclusions considerably further.

TABLE 7.1
Cognates related to Weaving, Textiles and Cloth in proto-Austronesian (pAn) and proto-Malayo-Polynesian (pMP)

Gloss	pAn	pMP
Loom	*ta-tenun-an *tenun-an	
To weave	*tenun	
Weaver's sword	*baRija	*balija
Weaving spindle	*qaNi	
Breast beam of loom, on which cloth is wound	*qatip qatip-an	*qatip
Tie, bind, attach by tying	*Siket	*hiket
Clothing	*qules	*qules
Cloth used to carry a child on the back	*SabaN	haban
Long cloth wrapped around body and used for carrying	*Sabit	*habit
Skirt, sarong		*tapis

Source: Blust (2014).

The reconstructed pAn vocabulary includes three terms for parts of a backstrap loom: the sword which the weaver uses to part the warp threads, to open a shed and to beat down the weft, a spindle or frame on which yarn is wound, and the breast beam of the loom. The presence of these three cognates is a strong indication that weaving was an important part of the repertoire of technologies that settlers carried south with them (versus being introduced at a later time by another route). The presence of these cognates in pAn, as well as in pMP, reflects the presence of weaving on body-tensioned looms in Taiwan at a date prior to the expansion of Austronesian-speakers into ISEA.

Blust comments that he was not able to identify any cognates in pAn or pMP that relate to bark-cloth production. Stone beaters/grinders that have been found in the archaeological record of south China, Taiwan and the Philippines have usually been interpreted as implements for making bark cloth, though there are also other uses for such implements, for example in grinding roots for food preparation. Bark cloth seems

to have gained importance, however, as migrants moved into regions further south in ISEA, attested by cognates such as *zaluán (bark cloth) in proto-Western Malayo Polynesian.

The reconstructed terms for clothing and fabric use in pAn are interesting. They include several terms for loops of textile used for carrying a child on the back, for carrying other items or for climbing trees. These applications require a strong textile (bark cloth is not strong enough for these uses) and they also imply the use of woven or plaited textiles. A term for a tubeskirt (tapis) is present in pMP, but (significantly) it is absent in pAn.

7. Austronesian Weaving: Out of Taiwan, or Out of the Mainland?

Putting the archaeological, linguistic and present-day geographic evidence together, a picture emerges of the textile-related skills of the Austronesian settlers who colonized ISEA. They were equipped with an externally braced backstrap loom for weaving cloth, and they made mats and cordage as well. They wore tubeskirts and carried their children in slings on their backs. They used mainly warp-based decorative techniques on their cloths, in which ikat figured prominently. These are all elements that are still present today in most parts of ISEA that are inhabited by Austronesian speakers, and they are recognized as key parts of the Austronesian cultural inventory. Most of these items are (or were) also part of the cultures of Daic peoples in MSEA.

The widely accepted narrative for Austronesian migrations identifies Taiwan as the “homeland” of the Austronesians. It supposes that early migrants moved from southern Taiwan to the northern Philippines, followed by continuing migration south into other parts of ISEA (Bellwood 2007, 2013). A common linguistic and cultural heritage for Austronesian speakers in ISEA is incontrovertible, but the details of the earlier stages of this migration, and the relationships between mainland linguistic groups, particularly Daic speakers, and Austronesian speakers is still a matter of debate (Blench 2012, 2013).

Evidence for the movement of peoples and culture from southern Taiwan to the Batanes Islands and thence to northern Philippines seems solid. Recent archaeological work (Bellwood and Dizon 2005, 2013) traces the southward movement of red-slipped pottery and other markers characteristic of Neolithic cultures in Taiwan. Evidence of southward movement beyond this point is much more patchy at present.

Attempting to fit the dissemination of weaving to the “out of Taiwan model” throws up some problems: key components of the Austronesian repertoire are absent or play only a secondary role in Taiwan. The externally braced version of the back-tensioned loom is occasionally used in Taiwan, but it does not appear to have been the primary loom for any Austronesian speakers in Taiwan except for the Yami of Lanyu (Green Island), who speak a language belonging to the Bashiic group, associated with the northern Philippines. Ikat is absent in Taiwan, and the characteristically Austronesian tubeskirt is rarely if ever found, most Taiwan aboriginals wearing blankets, wrap-around skirts, leggings and loincloths (Willis 1954). Positing that this group of technologies was present at one time in Taiwan but has since vanished or been replaced by simpler forms (such as the foot-braced form of the loom) in Taiwan, but not in ISEA, involves too much special pleading to be credible.

A much more probable source for all three of these key Austronesian cultural features (loom, ikat, tubeskirt) is the Asian mainland, specifically the area that is now the coast of southern and southeastern China. This is based on consideration of the present-day weaving cultures of the Daic and other peoples in MSEA who are descended from groups who lived in this area, coupled with archaeological evidence from Yunnan and northern Vietnam. Regarding the route that these technologies took into ISEA, we can be sure that mainland relatives of early Austronesians speakers possessed seaworthy vessels (since their ancestors made the initial crossing to Taiwan). If early Austronesians were able to navigate the difficult north–south route from Taiwan to the Philippines, it is very likely that they were also in contact with related groups on the mainland via east–west routes.

The objection to this argument of a mainland component to Austronesian migrations is that linguistic and genetic data points to Taiwan as the Austronesian “homeland”. In fact, currently available linguistic analysis does not provide us with a clear geographic location for pAn. The Malayo-Polynesian (MP) languages are indisputably related to the Formosan group, but to be sure that they originated solely on Taiwan we would need to be able to place them within a clearly defined sub-branch of those languages. In fact the most widely accepted model for the Formosan language “group” lacks discernable internal structure,⁷ and pMP is equally close (or equally distant) from all of them. This being the case, we cannot say for certain that pMP is more closely related to Formosan languages than to vanished mainland forebears. Similar limitations apply to genetic data.

This is not to say that migrants into ISEA could not have come from Taiwan (some evidently did), but to point out that the linguistic and genetic data do not exclude a mainland component. Nor is this a criticism of reconstructions of pAn. These still represent the “best estimate” available, given the linguistic evidence that we have. The uncertainty lies with the geographic location of this ancestral language. Since proto-languages do not come with a latitude and longitude attached this is necessarily a matter of inference and conjecture.

Considering the various pieces of evidence, it seems likely that there was an initial movement of weaving culture from Taiwan to the northern Philippines, but this proved to be a false start, perhaps due to the unsuitability of existing fibre preparation methods in the new climatic/vegetation zones in the central Philippines. Subsequently, migrants from the mainland brought a new type of loom and (perhaps) fibre processing methods that were more successful, together with the

⁷ This model for the relationship between Austronesian languages is the well-known one due to Blust (1999). Alternative models have been proposed, such as Malcom Ross’ version that places Malayo-Polynesian within a “Nuclear Austronesian” subgroup (Ross 2009), and Laurent Sagart’s version that includes Tai-Kadai as a subgroup (Sagart 2004). At the time of writing no clear consensus has emerged on these internal groupings.

tubeskirt and ikat, and this was the weaving-related repertoire that subsequently spread throughout ISEA. This must have occurred fairly soon after the initial colonization of the Philippines, given the deep roots within Austronesian languages for weaving related terms.

Howard (2010) surveyed ikat weaving in ISEA and MSEA and concluded that ikat and its associated weaving cultures originated on the mainland, specifically with the late period of the “Dong-Son” culture, centred on what is now northern Vietnam and associated with the production of spectacular bronze drums. I agree with Howard that the evidence points to a mainland origin, but I do not think that such a late date (corresponding to the beginning of the historical period, around 2,000 years ago) fits the evidence. The linguistic and other data that I have reviewed point to an earlier date and to a link with the Austronesian migration, and weaving technology itself is clearly much older. In addition, there are no known processes operating in the early historical period (either demographic or political) that could account for the broad distribution of the body-tensioned loom and warp-based weaving tradition in eastern ISEA. Trade networks certainly existed at that time, but trading networks do not spread novel techniques. On the contrary, traders tend to keep such information secret in order to protect their monopoly.

I do not rule out the possibility of even earlier (pre-Austronesian) transmission(s) of weaving from the Asian mainland to ISEA, and the occasional sightings of the older foot-braced form of the loom in ISEA hint that this may also have occurred. As mentioned, however, it seems unlikely that the foot-braced loom was ever widespread in ISEA. If it had been, we would expect to find it still in-use in more remote areas (by analogy with Hainan, Taiwan and the Lao–Vietnam border regions), since complete replacement of one traditional technology by another is rare, as the present-day patchwork of different forms on the Asian mainland demonstrates. Some occurrences of foot-braced loom weaving, such as sporadic sightings in the Himalayas and in New Guinea, may represent a devolution/simplification of externally-braced back-tensioned looms, rather than a preservation of an archaic type. The distinguishing feature in such cases is that the foot-braced

looms are rather basic in form, they are not the main looms that are employed, and they are used occasionally for weaving narrow items such as belts, or as teaching-aids for children.⁸

8. Weaving Cultures in the Historical Period (Around 2,000 Years Ago to the Present Day)

The third phase of development of weaving culture began in two centres, both located on the Asian mainland and both associated with the rise of kingdoms and social organization on a new scale. These transformed the lowland areas of China, MSEA, Sumatra and Java, while leaving upland areas and the remoter islands of ISEA, with their older weaving traditions, relatively untouched.

One of the key regions (once again) was central China, where new types of looms with frames were developed. As noted, these make their first appearance no later than the Warring States period and may have an even longer history. These looms transposed the back-tensioned loom into a raised frame with a seat, and added various mechanical aids (such as treadles) to make weaving easier and faster (see Figure 7.4). There are several different types, which were gradually adopted over much of what is now China, leaving ground-level back-tensioned looms confined to upland areas. These new looms spread east to Korea and Japan, but did not spread offshore into ISEA. Mainland textile making traditions are still extremely varied today, and cover the range from minority traditions in upland areas that preserve ancient styles and techniques, to progressive traditions making luxurious silks for the use of urban elites.⁹

⁸ Duggan (2014, 2015) suggests that Indonesian cloths made with uncut warps were formerly made on foot-braced back-tensioned looms, and that this (indirectly) is evidence for the former presence of this loom in ISEA. This is an interesting suggestion, but there are a couple of difficulties. Firstly, it is founded on the notion that there is a link between the length of cloth woven on a loom and the type of loom: this is debatable (see Note 2 above). Secondly, no actual examples of these cloths being woven on foot-braced looms have (to date) come to light.

⁹ Boudot and Buckley (2015).

At around the same time as these developments occurred in central China, the “Indianized” kingdoms¹⁰ of Dvaravati, Angkor and Champa, with their associated Hindu and Buddhist cultures, were beginning to develop on the mainland. Kingdoms of a similar character, including Srivijaya and early Mataram appeared in Sumatra and Java. These kingdoms were associated with a new aesthetic that included a taste for large and formal cloths made of silk and cotton, decorated with weft ikat and supplementary weft, associated with the more sophisticated looms with reeds and flat warps that were needed for making these items. This weft-based textile tradition largely (but not entirely) replaced older warp-based traditions in lowland areas of MSEA, Sumatra and Java. In political terms, the difference between the Indianized kingdoms and the older Austronesian societies to the east is one of scale. The Indianized kingdoms organized people and matériel on a large scale, leaving evidence of this in monuments such as Angkor, Borobudur, and Prambanan. In contrast, political organization in more remote Austronesian societies remained on a smaller and more local scale.

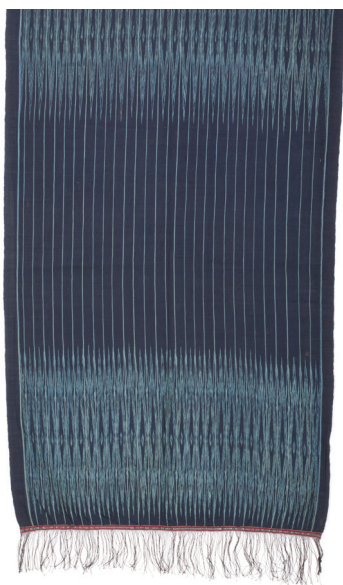
Wisseman Christie (1993) has analyzed *sīma* charters, records that relate to taxation in tenth century Java, which provide an interesting insight into societal organization of the period, and into textile production in particular. The charters reveal that many textiles produced in Java were made on a professional basis, with division of labour into several classes. Professional dyers of this period were called *maṇapus*, a term that seems to have been linked to the tying of ikat cloth before dyeing, and ikat seems to have been a significant product at that time. Both cotton and silk were used, and both were referred to by Sanskrit-derived terms (*kapas* and *bsar*, respectively). The looms used included a reed (*suri*) and were of an advanced type derived from the mainland. Professional weavers seem to have used the most sophisticated loom called a *candar* loom, while households continued to use a simpler back-tensioned form, perhaps adapted to weave weft-faced textiles by modifying it with a flat warp and a reed (see below). These developments paralleled those taking place in weaving on the Chinese mainland during the same period, though Java and Sumatra clearly

¹⁰ A concept that originates from the work of George Coedès (1968).

looked towards India rather than China for inspiration for both designs and methods during this period.

An interesting case that illustrates some of the processes involved at the margins of the Indianized kingdoms is that of Batak weaving, centred on Lake Toba in a relatively remote part of northern Sumatra. Batak weavers make large cotton cloths (called *ulos* by the Toba Batak) that show the influence of the Indianized aesthetic in their formal layouts and small motifs, evenly distributed across the cloth (see Figure 7.24). Despite their large size and fine weaving these cloths are warp-faced, with warp ikat decoration, and they are woven on the older Austronesian back-tensioned loom with a circular warp (Niessen 2009). The loom is significantly wider than most MSEA back-tensioned looms: in the case of the widest cloths that are produced it is probably close to the limit for a loom of this type, determined by the weaver's reach as she removes and re-inserts the sword-beater at the edge of the

FIGURE 7.24



Cotton *Ulos* (86 cm × 256 cm, detail), Decorated with Warp Ikat, made by Toba Batak People, Northern Sumatra

warp. It seems that the Batak weavers adopted the new Indic-derived aesthetic, but re-interpreted it in a warp-based format, retaining their Austronesian loom virtually unchanged (Niessen 2009). This contrasts with the lowland cultures of Sumatra who adopted both the weft-based tradition and the new loom.

Aside from weaving, the Batak are also renowned for their sculptures in wood and stone. In contrast with the abstract motifs of their cloths, this is a figurative, representational tradition, based on animals and anthropomorphs, including ancestor figures and protectors. Batak sculpture was not untouched by influence from the Indianized kingdoms (Sibeth and Carpenter 2007), but it remained firmly rooted in a much older tradition in both style and technique. The weaving and the sculptural traditions responded in divergent ways to outside influences, and they record the highly selective adoption of foreign elements into Batak society.

As mentioned, in much of the Malaysian peninsula, Sumatra, and Java the weft-based tradition is associated with looms with complex frames with raised seats. In the southern part of Sumatra, around Palembang, in Lombok and in parts of Bali, however, weavers use a ground-level version of the loom with a flat warp and a reed (see Figure 7.25), using this to weave weft-patterned cloths, including some finely worked cloths decorated with weft ikat and gold-thread supplementary weft (*songket*). This loom also occurs in a few other places in ISEA, such as western Flores, and amongst Bugis weavers in southern Sumatra, where it is also associated with silk textiles in the weft-faced tradition. A related loom with a reed is also used by Mandaya weavers in southern Philippines. There are two different possibilities for the origin of these looms. One is that they are the direct descendants of an early form of the loom with flat warp and a reed that preceded the development of a frame. A second, perhaps more likely possibility, is that these looms are the result of adapting the mainland (reed and flat warp) technology to the older Austronesian loom. The names given to parts of these looms retain some characteristic Austronesian terms (such as *beliro* for the weavers' sword, and *apit* for the cloth beam) which lends some support to this idea, as does the fact that it tends to be found today in marginal areas where mainland influences from the last two millennia have come into contact with older Austronesian traditions.

FIGURE 7.25



Weaver in Palembang, Southern Sumatra, using a Back-Tensioned Loom with a Flat Warp and a Reed to Weave a Silk Cloth Patterned with Supplementary Weft (*songket*)

9. The Back-tensioned Loom in the Americas

Looms of very similar appearance to Asian body-tensioned looms occur along the west coast of the Americas, from Mesoamerica down to Peru. Similarities between these looms and Asian looms have long been noted: for example Junius Bird discussed the question of a link between the two at some length (Bird 1979). The distribution of back-tensioned weaving in the Americas is certainly suggestive, and the looms are similar. Back-tensioned looms in the Americas are invariably of the externally-braced type: the foot-braced form is absent.¹¹ As well as the

¹¹ See the various papers on New World looms in Emery and Fiske (1977), also Laverne Waddington (private communication).

circular warp already discussed, a more complicated version is also found in the Americas called “false circular warping”. In this system the warp is actually flat, but is joined into a circle using a stick: when the weaving is finished the stick is removed, leaving a flat cloth with loops at both ends. This system is also found in a few widely scattered places in Asia, including Sulawesi and the Himalayan region. It also occurs in some traditional European looms, where it is probably an independent invention.

One objection that might be raised to the idea of transmission across the Pacific is the absence of weaving in remoter Pacific islands. If weaving was not transmitted to these places, where there is evidence of migration, why suppose that it was carried to the Americas, where there is none? The key factor in the Americas may have been the presence of pre-existing weaving cultures. Native Americans who already had yarn and understood textiles might have been in a better position to exploit back-tensioned loom technology than Austronesians beginning with a “blank slate” on a remote and uninhabited island.

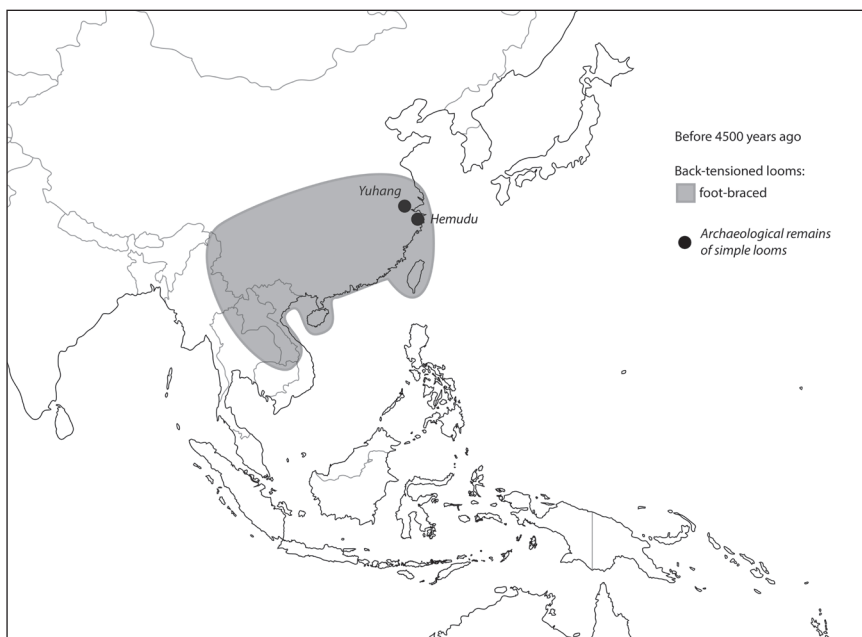
Bark cloth also occurs in the Americas, as recently reviewed by Cameron (2008), who concluded that there was no firm evidence for trans-Pacific transmission of this technology. In the case of weaving the evidence is suggestive, but proof of transmission remains elusive.

10. Summary: A Model for the Early Development of Weaving in Asia¹²

The earliest loom in Asia of which traces survive today appears to be the foot-braced form of the back-tensioned loom. This loom was already well-developed by the late Neolithic period, around 4,500 years ago. Considering both its present-day distribution and archaeological remains it seems to have spread widely on the Asia mainland, presumably accompanied by the warp-based decorative tradition, including ikat (see Figure 7.26).

¹² Presented in the spirit of George Box’s dictum: “essentially, all models are wrong, but some are useful” (Box 1987).

FIGURE 7.26

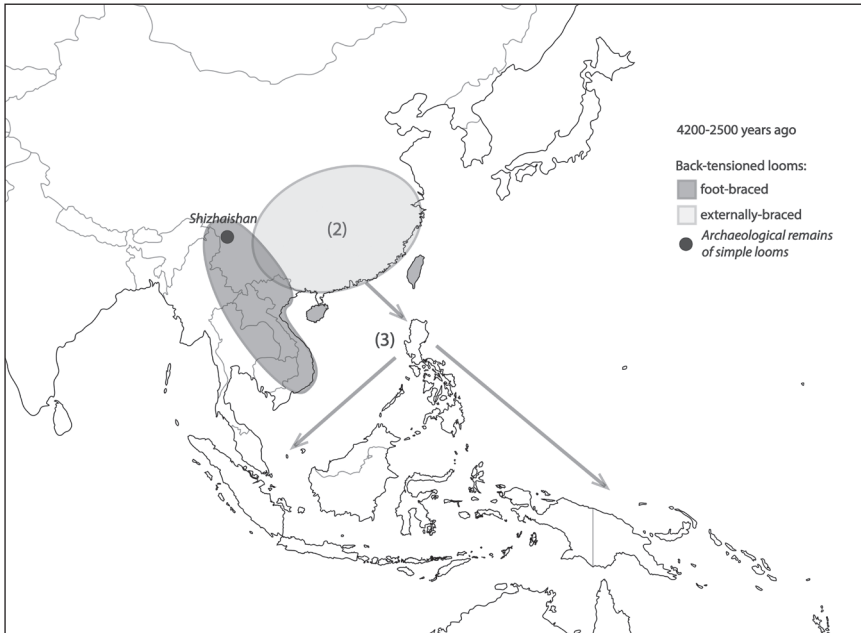


Map Illustrating a Model for the Development and Spread of Body-Tensioned Looms in Asia: Earliest Period (Before 4,500 Years Ago)

At some point, prior to the Austronesian expansion into ISEA, externally braced back-tensioned looms were developed from the older foot-braced type. Because of their advantages for making longer, wider cloths these types eventually became the dominant form on the Asian mainland (see Figure 7.27(2)), replacing the foot-braced variety over much of its original range. The externally-braced loom was also carried into much of ISEA by Austronesian settlers, together with its associated warp-based tradition (see Figure 7.27(3)).

The first migrants who colonized the northern Philippines originated in Taiwan, but the migrants who brought weaving to ISEA, together with their more advanced loom and ikat weaving, came from the mainland. These migrants carried weaving as far east as parts of Micronesia, the northern coast of New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, and as far west as Madagascar. They did not succeed in establishing it in the remoter islands in the Pacific, probably because of the complexity of weaving

FIGURE 7.27

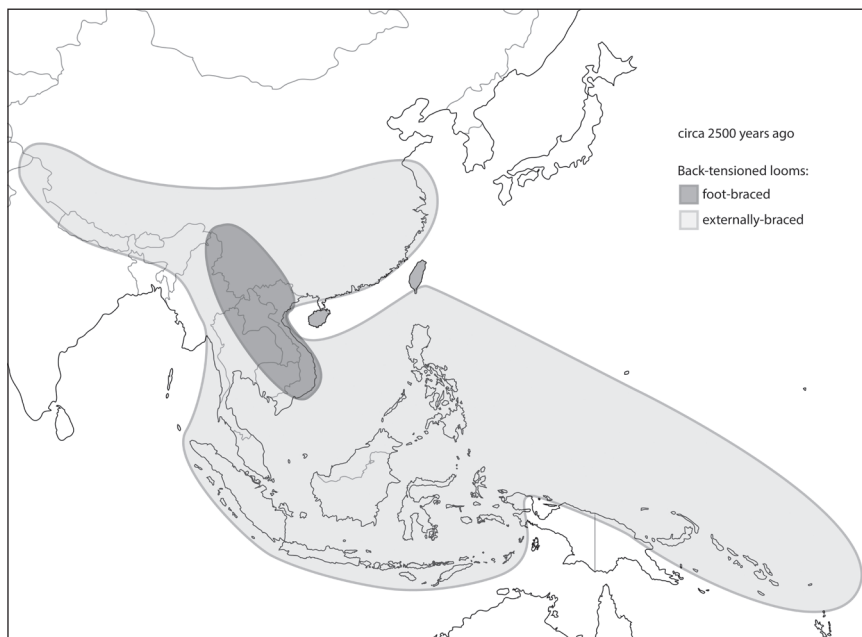


Map Illustrating a Model for the Development and Spread of Body-Tensioned Looms in Asia: Intermediate Period (4,200–2,500 Years Ago)

with its interlinked components: settlers arriving in each far flung island were obliged to start afresh to find a suitable fibre source and figure out how to process it into yarn. In parts of ISEA, various leaf-based fibres were exploited to make yarns, but in smaller and remoter islands the challenge of re-invention proved too great. The quicker and more flexible method of beating bark to make cloth proved to be more portable.

While the back-tensioned loom was still spreading in ISEA, more advanced looms with frames were being developed in central China. The first types of frame looms transposed the back-tensioned loom directly into a raised frame with a seat, fixing the warp beam in the frame, but retaining a cloth beam fixed to the weaver's waist via a backstrap. The circular warp was replaced by a flat warp, kept in order with a reed. They made their first appearance in the Eastern Zhou period and eventually spread as far as Japan in the east, and MSEA in the west (see Figures 7.28 and 7.13).

FIGURE 7.28



Map Illustrating a Model for the Development and Spread of Body-Tensioned Looms in Asia: Later Period (2,500 Years Ago). Compare Present Day Distributions (Figure 7.13)

At the penultimate stage in the development of Asian weaving, looms with flat warps and reeds, associated with a weft-based decorative tradition, were carried, together with the Indianized Hindu and Buddhist cultures of MSEA, into peninsular Malaysia, Sumatra and Java. This tradition is associated with frame looms with raised seats on the mainland, but in places where it met the older Austronesian tradition (Sumatra, Bali, Lombok) it was re-adapted to the ground-level format. This hybrid loom was later carried eastwards into some parts of ISEA, for example by Bugis settlers in southern Sulawesi. Most of the eastern regions of ISEA retained their older, warp-based traditions however (see Figure 7.13).

The dividing line between these two cultural regions is the “Ikat line”, that divides the Indianized kingdoms to the west from Austronesian cultures closer to their original states in the east. This line, running from

northwest to southeast in Figure 7.12, is reminiscent of the Wallace line that divides the flora and fauna of Wallacea from the regions to the west. The Wallace line lies to the east of Borneo and the Philippines however, and follows the former coastline of Sundaland at its maximum extent at the height of the last ice age. The Wallace line and the Ikat line are not directly related, but they both stem from the same ultimate cause: they reflect the increasing challenge of navigating from landmass to landmass as one moves from west to east, encountering longer ocean crossings and more remote islands. In fact, both lines are not true boundaries but reflect gradients from west to east.

The ikat line reflects the approximate limit of direct political influence of the Indianized kingdoms. West of this line, they had a direct and transformative influence on the former cultures of the region. This included the near-complete replacement of the older warp-based weaving tradition by weft-based techniques. To the east of the line their influence on textile traditions was mediated primarily via trade and was more subtle, affecting the decorative layout of certain cloths but leaving technique untouched. For example, the large ceremonial cloths (*pua kumbu*) of the Iban people echo the imposing size and layout of Indian trade cloths, re-interpreted using native Iban motifs and warp-based techniques (see Figure 7.29).

In the most recent stage of loom development, back-tensioning was replaced by a cloth beam fixed to the frame, and the older heddle plus shed-stick system replaced by a pair of heddles worked by treadles. This loom (which is now found worldwide) has been gradually replacing older types throughout Asia.

The spread of weaving technology in Asia has been characterized by innovation (over a period of millennia) and partial replacement of older technologies by newer ones. The replacement process is never complete however, and older traditions remain alongside newer ones in a complex patchwork. Remarkably, a few regions such as Taiwan and Hainan retain looms and traditions that appear to descend directly from Neolithic weaving with very few changes.

FIGURE 7.29



**Cotton *Pua Kumbu* (108 cm × 214 cm),
a Ceremonial Cloth made by Iban
People from Kalimantan. Compare
with Figure 7.23**

To date, reconstructions of the Neolithic and post-Neolithic colonization process of ISEA (and the Asian mainland) have been based mainly on linguistic and archaeological considerations. Linguistic analysis has proved tremendously powerful, but has limitations, particularly in cases where living relatives of early languages are absent, and at greater time-depths where resolution is poor. Some aspects of conservatively transmitted material culture, including weaving technology, may have time depths that are equal to or exceed those of linguistic features, and offer alternative ways probing the past, as well as appreciating the cultural legacy of the present.

TABLE 7.2
Summary of the Characteristics of Two Major Weaving Traditions in
MSEA and ISEA

	Weft-based Tradition	Warp-based Tradition
Locations	Western parts of mainland SEA Malaysian peninsula Sumatra Java Bali Lombok	Eastern parts of mainland SEA Hainan East Nusa Tenggara East Timor Philippines Borneo
Ikat type	Weft ikat	Warp ikat
Principal materials	Silk, cotton	Bast fibre, cotton
Loom types	Flat warp, with reed	Circular warp, with coil rod Body-tensioned looms
Decorative layout	Formatted around a “frame” Different motifs in centre, borders	Small motifs, organized hierarchically in bands
Motifs	Chevrons, small figurative motifs	Motifs built from dashes and ticks, which are often clearly visible in the design
Organization of labour	1) Home based 2) Family workshops and commercial workshops	Home based, mainly for own use, some localized trade
Sex of weavers	Female, with male participation in commercial settings	Female
Typical uses	Waist wraps, ceremonial cloths	Tubeskirts, loincloths, ceremonial cloths

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8

PRE-AUSTRONESIAN ORIGINS OF SEAFARING IN INSULAR SOUTHEAST ASIA

Waruno Mahdi¹

1. Introduction

Earliest sea crossings and offshore fishing in various parts of the world—including Taiwan, the supposed homeland of Austronesian languages—are dated in the period of rising seas, from the outgoing Pleistocene (c. 14,000 BP) until Mid Holocene, or later. But archaeological

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data to be cited below show that sea crossings and high-sea fishing in Insular Southeast Asia (henceforth ISEA) must have begun at least three times earlier (*c.* 45,000 BP). When people elsewhere just began developing seaworthy watercraft, equatorial populations retreating before the rising seas in ISEA were likely to have already accumulated tens of millennia of experience, so it is only natural to expect that innovations in the construction of such watercraft originated from there.

In this process of constructional innovation, the raft—the primeval watercraft—was likely to have been replaced by a multiple dugout²—a “raft” with dugouts instead of logs—and then a double canoe, when improved construction of dugouts, and perhaps also smaller loads, made more than two hulls superfluous. I cite evidence elsewhere (Mahdi 2016) indicating that Chinese as well as Malayo-Polynesian (henceforth MP)³ shipping had developed from a double canoe. However, as this latter was not a primeval watercraft construction, it was likely to have been acquired from the very equatorial populations—apparently ancestors of present-day Negritos—who, retreating before the rising seas, also brought it northwards from ISEA to Fujian, and subsequently to Taiwan.

I will cite biogenetic data which place populations of Taiwan and ISEA closer to one another than either of them to that of the Chinese mainland. These data have even led to theories, to be cited below, of an equatorial origin of the Austronesians. Nevertheless, linguistic studies will also be cited, which indicate that the reconstructable corpus of Proto-Austronesian shares a significant number of elements with language phyla of the mainland. At the same time, one can distinguish two distinct protoforms for “person”, depending on whether of Australoid or Mongoloid appearance. The first migration wave of

² I discuss another development, i.e. the tapered raft, in Mahdi (2016).

³ All Non-Taiwanese Austronesian languages are Malayo-Polynesian, and form a unique branch of the Austronesian language phylum, all other branches being confined to Taiwan (see Blust 2009, p. 49). Furthermore, I will refer to native speakers of Austronesian languages as “Austronesians”, and to speakers of Malayo-Polynesian languages as “Malayo-Polynesians”.

Malayo-Polynesians apparently referred to themselves as the former (Mahdi 1994; 2016).

Available archaeological and other data to be discussed below suggest development of a maritime mercantile tradition in the South China Sea, connecting Mainland Southeast Asia (henceforth MSEA) with the Philippines, and Southeast China and Taiwan with ISEA. The resulting Trans-South-China-Sea network apparently involved populations speaking MP languages, having the physical appearance of Negritos (as defined below), and being socioeconomically akin to Sea-People- or Sama-Bajau communities. This translocal network continued into the metal age, as reflected by the Sa Huỳnh–Kalanay material-culture complex. One of its early features was burial of the dead in boat-formed coffins, and the use of MP words for “boat” for “coffin”, attested from Assam till Sulawesi. The widespread metal-age “boat-of-the-dead” cult may be a later development of the tradition of burial in boat-formed coffins.

Communities with maritime mobility of various stages of development apparently operated around the Bay of Bengal for a long period of time too. Data on very early plant transmissions from ISEA to India, particularly of the banana and the coconut, will be considered. In a much later period, in the course of the first millennium CE, the dispersal of alternative variants of the place name *Yava[dvīpa]* (in Sumatra) between China and Greece suggests ancestors of the Moken as carriers (Mahdi 2009, pp. 76–78, 80). These and other circumstances, suggest that equatorial populations from ISEA had been active in the Bay of Bengal since well before 1,000 BCE till perhaps 500 CE.

2. Who Are—and Were—the “Negritos”?

The term “Negrito”—first introduced by the Spanish as a diminutive of *negro* “black” (Endicott 2013, p. 9)—is somewhat diffusely and often ambiguously defined in the literature. As Negritos will be central to this discussion, this issue needs to be more closely inspected.

Referring to people with equatorial complexion who originally inhabited ISEA, New Guinea, Insular Melanesia and Australia, I will use the cover term “Australoids” without implications of an either

assumed or actual biogenetic unity. I will further provisionally differentiate Australoids on a geographical basis into: “Negritos”, when located to the west of Halmahera, New Guinea and Timor; “Papuan”, when located on these islands or further east; and “Aborigines”, when located in Australia. It is not yet clear whether all pre-Austronesian peoples in ISEA dwelling to the west and north of Wallacea (the sea and islands situated between the Sunda and Sahul Shelves) formed a genetic unity, so the use of the term Negrito remains provisional in this respect.

With regard to the linguistic perspective, Greenberg (1971) proposed that languages originally spoken in a wider region including ISEA and Near Oceania, more specifically in the Andamans, Timor, Halmahera, New Guinea, the Solomons, and Tasmania, formed a common superfamily. Subsequent more detailed studies have not confirmed the shared genetic affiliation of all the included language groups.⁴ However that may be, languages spoken by Negritos were not, and could not be, included in the picture, because practically no adequate remains of their original languages have survived. In the Philippines, the original languages of peoples referred to as “Negritos” have been replaced by languages of the MP group (see Reid 1994), whereas peoples known in peninsular Malaysia as the Semang, who are commonly characterized as belonging to a “Negrito phenotype”, now speak languages of the Aslian branch of Austroasiatic languages (Diffloth 1975; Benjamin 2013, pp. 475–78).

The socioeconomic and culture-anthropological aspect of the problem is overshadowed by a—to my mind prejudicial—prevalent view that subsistence as hunter-gatherers (or foragers) is an intrinsic feature of the Negrito phenotype, just as dark complexion, short stature, and tightly curled hair (see review in Endicott 2013, pp. 8–9). It is even assumed that, at transition to the Neolithic, Negrito hunter-gatherers were either adsorbed into agricultural communities speaking Austroasiatic or Austronesian languages, or marginalized to ecological zones not under pressure of agricultural development (*ibid.*, p. 11), as if Negritos were incapable of self-sustained economic development.

⁴ See Pawley (2009) for a detailed and comprehensive review.

When the concentration of population exceeds levels allowing subsistence from natural resources, people are compelled to provide for themselves through agriculture and animal husbandry. When given ecological conditions provide sufficient natural food resources, people retain, or return to, a hunter-gatherer mode of subsistence in spite of possessing ample agricultural knowledge (Hutterer 1983, p. 175; Bellwood 2005a, pp. 37–38). There is no reason why Negritos should be regarded as deviating from this pattern, to assume hunting and gathering as an intrinsic feature. Indeed, Benjamin (2013, p. 449) calls attention to inconsistent reference to Orang Asli population groups with mutually comparably dark complexion in the Malayan Peninsula, as either “Negrito”, “Semang”, “Senoi” or “Proto-Malay”. The author’s solution to avoid inconsistencies was to use the term “Negrito” only with regard to such people of that phenotype who pursued a given mode of subsistence, that of hunter-gatherers.

This is methodologically quite correct, but in view of the much wider geographical and chronological scope to be considered in the present chapter it would be inadequate. Indeed, the concentration of mainland populations in consequence of inundation of the Sahul and Sunda Shelves by rising sea levels led to development of agriculture at the Kuk swamp in East New Guinea and emergence of the Bacsonian neolithic in MSEA well before the incursion of speakers of Austroasiatic and Austronesian languages (Mahdi 1988, pp. 348–49; 2016, pp. 28–29). The pattern of social organization of a given population changes over time, and a given pattern of social organization may be practised by peoples of various phenotypes.

A particular case are the once foraging Toála (lit. “forest people”) of Eastern Sulawesi. Although of a dark complexion, Sarasin (1906, pp. 117–18) indicates that they do not have as tightly curled hair as Negritos do. While the hair of many Toála is fairly curled (cf. *ibid.*, p. 54, Figure 3, Tafel VIII/13, IX/15), that of others is not (*ibid.*, Tafel VIII/14, X/18). Altogether, the author indicates a closer phenotype similarity to the Vedda of Sri Lanka, than to Negritos (*ibid.*, pp. 118–19). Meanwhile, the Toála are presently no longer hunter-gatherers, but farmers.

Well known are the Mlabri (also known as Yumbri; formerly called *Phi Tong Luang* “spirits of the yellow leaves”) in North Thailand. These hunter-gatherers are not Negritos, but belong to the same phenotype as the neighbouring agricultural peoples who allegedly “marginalized” the Negritos. The Mlabri are characterized by coarse (heavy) straight hair and high cheekbones, and speak a language of the Khmuic group of the Mon-Khmer branch of Austroasiatic.⁵ As further examples, Bulbeck (2013, p. 98) describes the Austroasiatic-speaking Shompen of the Nicobar Islands and the Semaq Beri of peninsular Malaysia.

Bulbeck also mentions the Punan (~ Penan), nomadic Non-Negrito hunter-gatherers of Central Kalimantan and Sarawak. The following possible backgrounds for their present mode of subsistence are suggested in the literature: (1) they are remnants of a primeval population, of which the others became farmers; (2) they represent a separate group which is fully independent of neighbouring farming peoples; (3) they are descendants of agricultural peoples who reached Kalimantan and underwent socioeconomic “devolution” in the hinterland jungle; and (4) it is not (yet) possible to determine their origin.⁶ One weakness of positions (1) and (2), and thus also of (4), is the failure to note the implications of the group’s physical complexion. The Punan do not represent an either Negrito or other equatorial phenotype; their skin colour is described as “light brown to brown”.⁷ Hence, the Punan must ultimately originate from the East Asian mainland,⁸ and reached their present equatorial

⁵ See Bernatzik (1941, pp. 111–81, and Figures 44–46, 55, 60, 61–66); Flatz (1963, particularly Figures 4 and 6–7, compare with a Non-Mlabri in Figure 5); Rischel (1995, p. 22, and colour photographs between pp. 16–17).

⁶ With regard to bibliographic references for hypotheses (1) till (3), see Sellato (1994, pp. 115–16) who himself holds to position (4).

⁷ See Bulbeck (2013, p. 96), and the photographs in Sellato (1994, pp. 111–12), and Urquhart (1951, plates XVI a and b).

⁸ Regional diversification (see Bulbeck 2013, p. 100) cannot substantiate a local origin of a striking non-equatorial phenotype, bearing in mind the dark complexion of descendants of all first *Homo sapiens sapiens* populations in ISEA, New Guinea and Australia. Furthermore, one would rather assume an equatorial origin for the Toåla of Sulawesi, than for the Punan.

homeland as part of the MP dispersal. They were thus agriculturists at one time in the past.

Being hunter-gatherers is not an exclusive way of life of Negritos, as some pre-Austronesian indigenes with “dark skin complexion and tightly curled hair” practise farming. For example, swiddening is reported for the Lanohs and the Bateks on the Malayan Peninsula (Benjamin 2013, p. 455). For Philippine Negritos, Bulbeck (2013, p. 97) mentions the Ayta (see Bellwood 2005a, p. 33) and the Palawan Bataks (Novellino 2011).

Besides foraging in primeval (undisturbed natural) forests, and in some instances farming, Negrito communities also earned their subsistence as maritime hunter-gatherers,⁹ being described as Negrito sea-nomads for example by Sopher (1965, pp. 54–59, 291–93). People of a Negrito or similarly equatorial phenotype apparently played a significant role in protohistorical maritime communication, particularly as ship crews. One Chinese source, Hui Lin’s ninth century “Comprehensive pronunciations and meanings of [words in] the [Buddhist] scriptures” (一切經音義, *Yīqiè jīng yīn yì*), describes Malay-speaking crews of Malayan ships (崑崙舶, *Kūnlún bó*) as follows (Pelliot 1925, pp. 257 and 261):

Running these ships are mostly *Gǔlùn*-s serving as seamen. ... These are *Yi*-barbarians amidst islands of the South Sea region; entirely black and naked-bodied.¹⁰

Gǔlùn is apparently a Chinese rendering of *hulun* ~ *kulun*, a word meaning “person” in languages of former vassals of the Malay thalassocracy of Sri Vijaya (Sanskrit *Śrī Vijaya*),¹¹ which also underwent a semantic shift to “servant”, and “I, me [your humble servant]” (Mahdi 1994, pp. 203–4, n. 23; 2009, pp. 79–80).

⁹ Maritime hunting and gathering also occurs outside Southeast Asia, see for example Yesner (1980).

¹⁰ The Chinese original: 運動此船多骨論為水匠 • ... 南海 州島中夷人也 • 甚黑裸形 • (*yùndòng cǐ chuán duō Gǔlùn wéi shuǐjiàng*; ... *Nánhǎi zhōu dǎozhōng Yírén yě*; *shènhēi luǒxíng*).

¹¹ I write “Sri Vijaya” (noun)/“Srivijayan” (adjective) by analogy to “Sri Lanka”/“Srilankan”.

Malays and Javanese indeed have a darker complexion than Han Chinese, but not sufficiently so to lead to the cited *Gǔlùn* description. Furthermore, the majority in Southeast China at that time were not Han Chinese, but the somewhat darker Thai-Kadai and Hmong-Mien, so it is unlikely that the quoted description referred to Malays in general. This follows more clearly from a passage in the seventh-century Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Yijing's "Account of the Righteous Law¹² sent from the South Seas" (南海寄歸內法傳 *Nánhǎi jìguī nèi fǎchuàn*), which indicated that they were "curly-haired" and black, while inhabitants of the islands were "not different from in China, but for going barefoot and wearing the sarong (干縵 *gānmàn*)".¹³

Indeed, vassal Negrito Sea-People (*Orang Laut*) communities apparently provided crews and even ships for Malayan monarchs and ship owners. Towards the end of this article, below, I will briefly return to the relationship between Sea-People vassals and their Malayan overlords.

3. ISEA as Original Scene of Maritime Mobility

As I noted elsewhere (Mahdi 2016, p. 28), it was during the rising sea level between the Late Pleistocene and Mid Holocene, mainly from c. 14,000 until 4,000 BP (Milliman and Emery 1968, pp. 1122–23) that maritime mobility developed in various parts of the world. This included crossings to isolated islands in the Mediterranean (Broodbank 2006; Ammerman 2010; Farr 2010), or to such islands before the west coast of North America (Erlandson, Moss and Lauriers 2008; Fitzhugh and Kennett 2010).

However, the humid tropical environment in ISEA apparently offered unique conditions which favoured and even motivated maritime mobility since a very much earlier period. The settlement of Sahul as early as c. 45,000 BP (O'Connell and Allen 2004, p. 849)

¹² That is Buddhism.

¹³ I had no access to the original Chinese text, and quote here from the English of I-Tsing (1896, p. 12); cf. also the French of I-Tsing (1894, pp. 63–64, fn. 7).

or *c.* 49,000–43,000 BP (Summerhayes et al. 2010, p. 78)¹⁴ implied maritime mobility to cross more than 100 km wide straits in Wallacea.

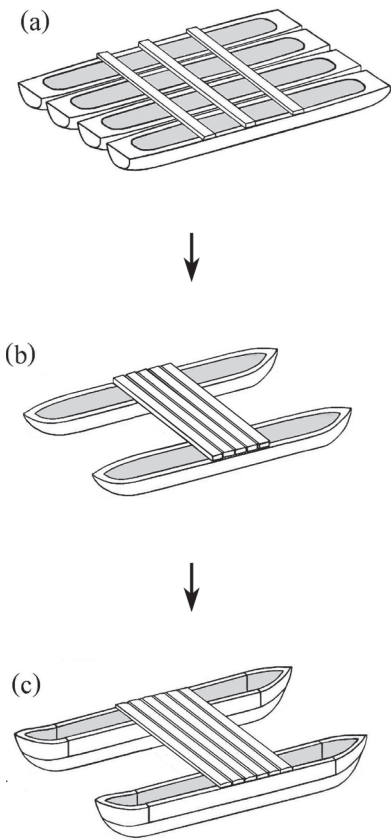
The sea crossings had not been accidental consequences of storms or tsunamis. Remains of deep-water fish, implying fishing well offshore, were found at sites dated before 30,000 BP in Sahul (Erlandson 2010, p. 22; O’Connell, Allen and Hawkes 2010, p. 60), and in East Timor (Lape, O’Connor and Burningham 2007, p. 240; O’Connor 2007, p. 530). It seems likely that the principal forms of watercraft were rafts which, besides bark canoes, have been reported along the entire east coast of Australia (Doran 1981, pp. 74–75).

So when the rising sea after 14,000 BP encouraged first maritime mobility elsewhere, seafaring in ISEA already looked back on experience since approximately 45,000 BP. Hence, one may expect that watercraft construction then advanced to further sophistications in ISEA. As suggested by Mahdi (2016, p. 27), this probably led to a multiple dugout, that is a “raft” of dugouts (see Figure 8.1*a*). Following increasing sophistication of the dugout hulls, and perhaps also lighter weight of the loads which were carried, the number of hulls could be reduced to the minimum of two, resulting in a double canoe (see Figure 8.1*b*).

It will become evident below, that the original watercraft of both the Chinese and the Austronesians was the double canoe. Not being a primeval type of boat construction, it must have been introduced by population groups—apparently Negritos—migrating northwards from ISEA to Southeast China and Taiwan. Then, at a later stage, apparently in the course of material-culture exchange as a result of contacts between the northwards-migrating Negritos and mainland populations, the double canoe underwent further constructional sophistication in that the dugout hulls were enhanced to so-called five-part hulls (see Figure 8.1*c*).

¹⁴ I leave out early radiocarbon dates of Sahul colonization at 65,000–60,000 BP (see references in Redd and Stoneking 1999, p. 808) which were apparently not yet calibrated.

FIGURE 8.1



**Primeval Developments in Watercraft Construction in ISEA Beyond the Raft:
(a) a Multiple Dugout, (b) a Double Canoe with Dugout Hulls, and (c) with
Five-part Hulls**

Source: Based on Mahdi 2016, Fig. 2.1.

Biogenetic data place populations of Taiwan and ISEA closer to one another than either of them to inhabitants of the Chinese mainland (Lin et al. 2005, p. 240). Indeed, such biogenetic data even gave rise to theories of an equatorial origin of the Austronesians, in particular in a “triangular area formed by Taiwan, Sumatra, and Timor” (Meacham 1984–85, pp. 94–95). However, there are significant historical-linguistic arguments against a purely equatorial origin of Austronesians. Donohue and Denham (2010) meanwhile indicate that there must have been significant exchange of material culture between Austronesians and pre-Austronesian inhabitants of ISEA. Furthermore, the observed dispersal of DNA could be explained by an early northwards migration of equatorial populations and their subsequent participation in the southwards MP dispersal (Mahdi, “Comment” in Donohue and Denham 2010, p. 242).

Linguistic data indicate two distinct protoforms for the word “person” in MP languages, depending on whether with darker or lighter skin taint. The reference to persons with equatorial complexion, **qata*, has reflexes meaning “person” in languages of ethnicities with equatorial complexion. These are typically distributed in peripheral areas, particularly on the Barrier islands to the west of Sumatra and closely related languages in North Sumatra, on islands of Nusa Tenggara, in Belau and New Caledonia (Mahdi 1988, p. 58; 1994, pp. 464–65; 2016, p. 30). For several languages, the reflexes have been glossed as “slave”—perhaps to be understood as “member of subordinate community”—particularly in Central and East Indonesia (ibid.). Reflexes of a variant with **R* infix, **qaRta*, occur in languages of the Philippines, in which it refers explicitly to Negritos (in languages of both Negrito and Non-Negrito peoples) (see Charles 1974, p. 460). It must be noted that not all dark-skinned people referred to by a reflex of the protoform **qata* (or **qaRta*) answer to an explicit Negrito phenotype. For example, the Enggano off the southwest coast of Sumatra, though dark-skinned, have straight rather than curled hair. I will therefore refer to dark-skinned Malayo-Polynesians named by a reflex of **qata* as “Qata”, regardless of whether explicitly of a Negrito phenotype or not.

Austronesian languages of ethnicities with apparent mainland—so-called “Mongoloid”—ancestry frequently have reflexes of the protoform **Cau* as word for “person” (Zorc 1994, p. 575). The protoform also served as first component in the compound form **Cau-mata*, reflexes of which are the word for “person” in languages forming part of a distribution sweep through Central–East Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, apparently in transit through former dispersal areas of reflexes of **qata* in Melanesia, all the way to Polynesia (Mahdi 1994, p. 461; where **Cau-mata* was reconstructed as **Cau ma-qata*). Considering that **C* is rendered *t* in just about all MP languages, I will refer to the **Cau* ~ **Cau-mata*—who are generally lighter-skinned than the Qata—as “Tau”. Evidently, following their own observations too, Austronesians represent populations of two distinct phenotypes. Consequently, the meeting of the two types at respective places in their distribution area would be felt to result from two happenings: a migration wave of darker-skinned Qata, followed in its wake by a migration of Tau.

The distinction of the two population types in ISEA based on their skin complexion was also made by European ethnologists in now obsolete terms of “race”, referring to darker-skinned “Proto-Malays” and lighter “Deutero-Malays” till as late as in Bylmer (1943), cf. the review of earlier treatments in Glinka (1981, pp. 103–5). With regard to Oceania, genetic data presented by Friedlaender et al. (2008) confirm the transit through Melanesia of a later population to Polynesia, representing a Tau “express train” passing through a region reached earlier by an Qata “slow boat” (cf. Oppenheimer and Richards 2001) and see Mahdi (1994, p. 466; 2016, p. 31).

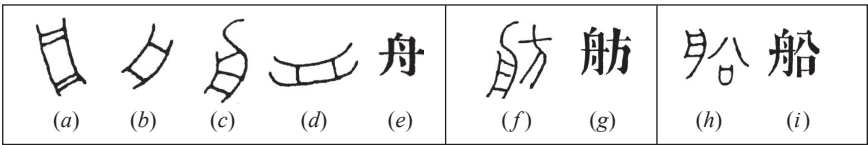
The concrete development of maritime communication in the South China Sea and into the Indian Ocean will be considered below. At this point it is important to corroborate the postulation that the watercraft which were introduced to the north were double canoes.

4. Introduction of Watercraft to Mainland China and Taiwan

Hornell (1946, pp. 88–89; see also Gibson 1958, pp. 16–17, 32) postulated that the original watercraft from which the Chinese junk developed had indeed been a double canoe, which was apparently introduced to the Chinese during the Late Shang (also known as Yin) period (1300–1046 BCE as dated in Lee 2002, p. 18, Table I). Needham (1971, pp. 392–96, 439) assumed development from a raft instead. However, concurring with Hornell, I have confirmed the origin from a double canoe on the basis of the early form of the corresponding script character Mahdi (1992; 2016, pp. 31–33).

The basic Chinese character for “watercraft”, 舟 *zhōu* (Giles 1912, #2446),¹⁵ which also functions as semantic radical in complex characters referring to watercraft, indeed appears to have originally depicted a double canoe (see Figure 8.2*a–e*). Rather than numerous longitudinal lines depicting the logs of a raft there are just two, one on each side like runners of a sleigh. These are connected by two or more transversal lines which never mark the bow and stern ends as they would in case of a raft (Mahdi 1992, p. 4; 2016, p. 31). The word *zhōu* (舟) “watercraft” must indeed have originally denoted a double canoe.

FIGURE 8.2



Ancient and Modern Renderings of Chinese Characters: (a–e) *zhōu* “watercraft”; (f–g) *fāng* “two boats lashed together”; and (h–i) *chuán* “boat, ship”. *a* and *b* are Late Shang bone (c. 1300–1046 BCE); *c*, *d*, *f* and *h* are Eastern Zhou (770–250 BCE); *e*, *g* and *i* are modern.

The pre-modern forms follow Karlgren (1940, ##1084b–e, 740h and 229f).

Source: Author.

¹⁵ I use the currently standard Pinyin transcription for Chinese, while Giles (1912) used Giles-Wade.

The early pronunciation of the word has been reconstructed as:¹⁶

- *zhōu* (舟) < EMC **tɕuw* (Pulleyblank 1991, p. 411) < OC **tju* (Baxter 1992, p. 810).

As semantic radical, the (narrowed) *zhōu* serves as component—typically on the left side—of composite characters referring directly or indirectly to watercraft, see for example Figures 8.2*f-i*. The former two (*f-g*) represent the oldest in a row of words referring to two boats lashed together:¹⁷

fǎng (舫) “two boats lashed together, a large boat, a galley” (Giles 1912, #3447), “two boats attached by the sides to each other, rectangular boat” (Couvreur 1904, p. 767) << EMC **puanʰ* (Pulleyblank 1991, p. 92) < OC **paŋ*;

háng (航) “two boats lashed together, a large vessel” (Giles 1912, #3852), “two boats attached by the sides to each other, boat” (Couvreur 1904, p. 767) << EMC **yaŋ* (Pulleyblank 1991, p. 120);

bàng (榜) “two boats fastened side by side” (Giles 1912, #8665);

páng (𦨭) “two boats lashed together, known as 𦨭舡 [*pángxiāng*]¹⁸ or 𦨭艘 [*pángshuāng*]¹⁹ (Giles 1912, #8694);

huáng (𦨭) “a fast sailing boat, a ferry boat” (Giles 1912, #5117), “boat, a ferry formed by two boats attached to each other by the sides” (Couvreur 1904, p. 768).²⁰

¹⁶ EMC = Early Middle Chinese, c. 590–680 CE (Pulleyblank 1991); OC = Old Chinese, c. 770–250 BCE (Baxter 1992).

¹⁷ Due to regional variation in meaning, I cite two different dictionaries.

¹⁸ The second element 舡 has two readings: *chuán* “boat, ship”, and *xiāng* “barge” (Giles 1912, #2741 and #4275 respectively). For the latter variant, the pronunciation in dialects given by Giles corresponds to that of *gāng* (扛) (ibid., #5886).

¹⁹ The second element is 艘 *shuāng* “boat” (Giles 1912, pp. 10, 119).

²⁰ The word also forms the compound *huángxiāng* (舡舡) “k.o. junk”, a dialectal form of which was apparently borrowed into Malay and Javanese as *wangkang*, cf. Jones (2007, p. 340). Giles (1912, #5117/5106 and #4275/5886) provides the following dialect forms: Guangzhou *wongk'ong*; Hakka *fongkong*; Fuzhou *hwongkoug*; Ningbo *wongkong*; Sichuan *hwangkang*; Yangzhou *hwangkang*; Beijing *hwangkang* (see also footnote 18). The Malay and Javanese cognate was apparently acquired from a

This custom of lashing two boats together may reflect an earlier use of double canoes, which would further confirm the origin of a junk from a double canoe. The custom persisted into the twentieth century, when two junks were joined by spars for the transport of timber and of reeds on the Middle Yangtze (Worcester 1971, pp. 419, 458). Noteworthy is that the first of the above series of words also occurred in the composite *fǎngchuán* (舫船)²¹ which, according to one historiographic source, denoted “double hulled boats” used in a military expedition in 312 BCE (Needham 1971, p. 441, fn. c).²²

With regard to Taiwan—the presumed homeland of Austronesian languages—it is noteworthy that its earliest inhabitants have been described as agriculturists (Chang 1969, pp. 60, 64, 249–50; Bellwood 1984–85; 1995; 2005*b*, p. 36), not as seafarers. Furthermore, there does not seem to be a unique Proto-Austronesian (PAN) protoform for “boat”. Instead one finds several protoforms with limited dispersal areas, including some probable doublets:²³

**qaCu* > (1) Sediq *ʔásəʔ*, Pazeh *ʔasuʔ*, Bunun *hatoʔ*

(Ferrell 1969, p. 247);

**qabaŋ* > (1) Saaroa *ʔabaŋə*, Oponohu-Rukai *havaŋu*, Siraya *avang*,
(2) Gaddang *ʔabaŋ*, Tiruray *ʔawaŋ*, Ilanun *awaŋ*, (4) Mentawai
abak, Moken *kabaŋ* “boat”

(Ferrell 1969, p. 247; Pawley and Pawley 1994, p. 338; Zorc 1994, p. 585);

northern dialect. Most Chinese immigrants in ISEA are from the south, particularly from Xiamen (a.k.a. *Amoy*), Southern Fujian, for the dialect of which I did not find a cognate in Douglas (1899). This may be the reason why the precursor of *wangkang* remained obscure to the public, leading even to a folk etymological reinterpretation as *wánggāng* (王艮), lit. “royal barge”.

²¹ With *chuán* “watercraft” (Giles 1912, #2742), attested for Eastern Zhou, see Fig. 2*f*.

²² Citing the apparently unpublished “Communications and Transport in the Chhin [sic] and Han Periods of Lo Jung-pang” (*Singapore 1912, †Davis, California 1981), which I was unable to access.

²³ Here and further, to save space, only skeletal listings are cited with representative examples from areas numerated as: (1) Taiwan; (2) the Philippines; (3) Sulawesi with neighbouring islands; (4) West of Sulawesi; (5) Nusa Tenggara; (6) Maluku; (7) West Papua and PNG with neighbouring islands; (8) Further Oceania. More elaborate listings can be found in the cited source references.

- *ban̩kaʔ* > (1) Kavalan *ban̩ka*, (2) Tagalog *ban̩káʔ*, Tausug *ban̩kaʔ*,
 (3) Mori, Muna *ban̩ka*, (5) Sumbawa *ban̩ka* ‘boat’
 (Dempwolff 1938, p. 20; Blust 1972, #83; Pawley and Pawley 1994,
 p. 338; Zorc 1994, p. 572);
- *wan̩ka*²⁴ > (5) Manggarai, Rembong *wan̩ka*, (6) Tifu *waga*, (7) Yautefa
wăgě, Yabem *waj*, Suau *waga*, (8) Fiji *wan̩ga*, Tonga *vaka*
 ‘boat’
 (Stresemann 1927, p. 67; Capell 1942, p. 115, #319;
 Pawley and Pawley 1994, p. 337).

Reflexes of the two first-cited protoforms **qaCu* and **qaban̩* are represented in several highest-level branches of Austronesian, meaning that both would be formally assignable to PAN. However, coexistence of two highest-level proto-synonyms is rather unlikely, and probably implies horizontal borrowing over borders of highest-level branches in some not more closely definable period I will refer to as Early Austronesian (EAn).

Kavalan *ban̩ka*, the unique reflex of **ban̩kaʔ* in Taiwan, is likely to be a borrowing from the Philippines (Ferrell 1969, p. 20; Wolff 2010, p. 756), so formally, the protoform is Malayo-Polynesian, like the fourth cited protoform **wan̩ka*. The respective distribution areas of reflexes of *ban̩kaʔ* and **wan̩ka* do not conform to the division between West and Central-East MP, meaning that we have another instance of horizontal borrowing between across borders of language groups.

The protoform **wan̩ka* is likely to be a secondary doublet of **ban̩kaʔ*, which in turn seems to share the root **ban̩* with the second item in the list, **qaban̩*. Furthermore, **qaCu* could consist of a root **Cu* and the same pre-posed **qa-* as in **qaban̩*, so that the four Austronesian items perhaps only represent two original lexical roots: **Cu* and **ban̩*.

²⁴ The protoform was mistakenly reconstructed as **wan̩kan̩*, amongst others by Dempwolff (1938, p. 164); Zorc (1994, p. 594); and Wolff (2010, p. 1027), who precipitously included the Chinese borrowing *wangkang* (see above, footnote 20) into the set of cognates (see Mahdi 1994, p. 217, #109; 2012b, p. 218).

The former seems likely to be a cognate of OC **tju* (modern *zhōu* 舟, see above). Meanwhile, OC **paŋ* (modern *fǎng* 舫) could be cognate with **baŋ*. Thus, not only do the Austronesian languages not have a unique highest-level protoform for “boat”, they share the two “closest-to-highest level” protoforms with Old Chinese. It seems likely that this lexical exchange—apparently reflecting material culture exchange—involved Early Malayo-Polynesians amongst the Baiyue (百越 *Bǎiyuè*) in the Fujian area (cf. Chang and Goodenough 1996, pp. 43–52) at a significantly later time than the primary branching of Proto-Austronesian.

The Malayo-Polynesians, meanwhile, do not have a uniform basic watercraft construction. Besides double canoes they also have single- and double-outrigger canoes, as well as single-hulled keeled plank-boats without outriggers. Of these, the double-outrigger canoe was at first assumed to have been the earliest (Heine-Geldern 1932; Hornell 1943). However, Doran (1981) showed that it was the double canoe that had been the original MP watercraft construction, and Mahdi (1988, pp. 54–55; 1994, p. 457, 481, n. 180; 1999a, pp. 145–48; and 2016, pp. 34–35) confirmed this with additional evidence. Hence, the watercraft form which was introduced into the Fujian-Taiwan region—presumably by northwards migrating Negritos—and served as prototype for Chinese as well as MP watercraft, was indeed the double canoe.

5. Maritime Proto-Globalization: The Trans-South-China-Sea Network

It seems likely that the seafarers who brought the common precursor of the protoform doublets **qabaŋ* ~ **baŋka?* ~ **waŋka* to the north had also been involved in the emergence of a tradition of maritime trade. The apparent (i.e. not genuine) protoform **beli* “buy” (perhaps also “acquire through barter”) seems to have been a secondary development, distributed through contact as a result of trade activity. The underlying PAn form or root seems to have been **liu* “change, exchange, return”—having the variant (allomorph) **liw* in affixed derivations, particularly with prefixes **ba-* and **sa-*:

**liu* > (1) Ami *paliw* “work on another’s field (in place of payment)”, *caliw* “borrow, lend”, Pazeh *bariw* “buy, sell”, (2) West Bukidnon-Manobo *liwan* “replace (something)”, (3) Bantik *liu* “turn upside down”, Sangir *saliu* “exchange”, Bolaang Mongondou *motaloy* “buy”, Bugis *bali* “answer”, (4) Malay *bali?* “turn back”,²⁵ *kəmbali* “return”, Kelabit *baliw* “transform”, (5) Manggarai *wali* “exchange, return”, (6) Buru *sali* “receive”, (8) Fiji *solu* “be given”, Samoa *liu* “change”

(Dempwolff 1938, p. 22; Blust 1989, p. 163, #542;
Zorc 1994, pp. 558, 571, 589; Wolff 2010, pp. 855, 894).

Evidently, reflexes of **ba-liw* were sporadically used for “exchange” and “barter” since a very early period, and transmitted in these meanings by trading communities, in whose vernacular it was rendered **beli* “buy, acquire through barter”. Distribution through contact resulted in a secondary cognate set (Mahdi 2012a, pp. 102–3):

**beli* > (1) Paiwan *vəli*, (2) Tagalog *bili* “buy”, (3) Bare’e *oli* “price”, Makassarese *balli*, (4) Malay *bəli*, Merina-Malagasy *vidi*, (5) Manggarai *wəli* “buy”, Leti *vəli*, (6) Buru *fili-n* “price”, (7) Motu *hoi*, (8) Fiji *voli-a* “buy”

(Brandstetter 1910, p. 21; Dempwolff 1938, p. 27;
Zorc 1994, pp. 558, 573; Wolff 2010, p. 765).

The distribution of reflexes of **beli* have certain aspects in common with that of **qabay* ~ **baŋka?* ~ **waŋka*: in both instances there is a limited reflexion in languages of Taiwan on one side, and a widespread representation over a significant part of the MP distribution area. Possibly, the same trading seafaring communities may have been involved in the beginnings of both protoform dispersals.

Solheim (1984–85, pp. 79–81) proposed an interesting concept for which the author coined the name “Nusantao”, supposedly meaning “people of the island homeland”.²⁶ The concept appeared at first to

²⁵ Some Malayic dialects have automatic postglottalization of final vowels.

²⁶ Actually, *Nusantao* more likely means “island homeland of people”. That which the author wished to express would be **Tau-* or **To-nusa*, compare *Toraja* (lit.

confuse linguistic, biogenetic, and material culture developments, to then assume a migration of Early (or even “Pre-”) Austronesian speakers from the north of East Indonesia northwards through the Philippines. It seems unlikely, however, that the rising sea level would have led to a migration from Wallacea rather than from inundated parts of the Sunda and Sahul Shelves.

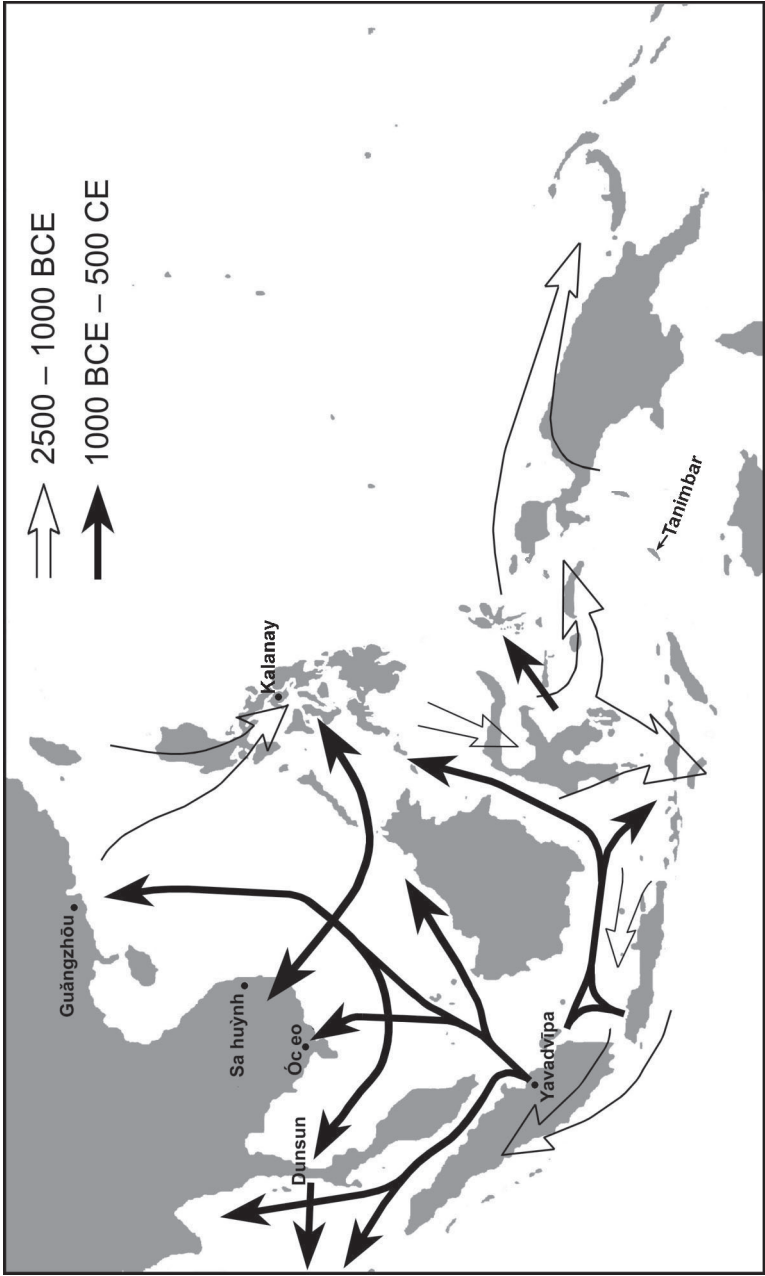
Remarkable in Solheim’s hypothesis is, however, that the author saw the “Sea Gypsies”²⁷ of Myanmar, Thailand and Malaysia and the Sama–Bajau of the Philippines, Sabah and Central Indonesia as the most direct descendants of his Nusantara (ibid., p. 86), and that the South China Sea apparently became the scene of maritime communication and trade involving communities that were linguistically MP, physiologically—for the greater part—Negrito, and socio-economically resembling the Sea-People. One may add that this may even have been a precursor of the well-known *kula* of Kiriwina (Trobriand) Islands (see Malinowski 1984) and *hiri* of the Gulf of Papua (Lewis 1969).

The emergence of a Trans-South-China-Sea maritime trade network is confirmed in particular by the dispersal of various items of material culture between Indochina and the Philippines, particularly a pottery complex that spread into the Archipelago (Solheim 1964, p. 196). It continued well into the metal age, as attested at Sa Huỳnh (Parmentier 1924) and Kalanay (Solheim 1957, pp. 286–88). This metal-age phase apparently coincided chronologically with the Acheho-Chamic migration into Indochina. It also involved earliest iron, bronze and glass objects dated 500 BCE till 500 CE in the Philippines (Bacus 2004, p. 263). The beginning of the above-mentioned Trans-South-China-Sea network, however, apparently dates from before the metal age. This includes Taiwan, Indochina, and the Philippines (see Hung and Bellwood 2010, particularly Figures 2.1–3).

“people of the interior or highlands”, **daya* “direction away from the sea”), or *Toála* (“people of the forest”, **Salas* “forest”).

²⁷ It is not clear whether by “Sea Gypsies” Solheim implied the Moken-Moklen alone here, or also the Sea People (*Orang Laut*) of Riau and the Strait of Malacca.

FIGURE 8.3



The Malayo-Polynesian Migration Through ISEA (2,500–1,000 BCE), and Maritime Communication in the ISEA—South China Sea Region (1,000 BCE–500 CE)

Source: Author.

One cultural feature connected with this network is of particular significance for the present study, and that is burial in boat-shaped coffins. Its prehistoric dispersal area included the Niah Caves in the North of Sarawak (Harrisson 1958) and several sites in Vietnam (Higham 1989, pp. 195, 204) and the Philippines (Junker 1999, p. 150). Boat-coffin burial in ISEA continued to be practised till recent times, as shown by Steinmann (1939, pp. 153–59).

On the island of Tanimbar, the dead were placed in coffins shaped like double canoes (van Hoëvell 1890*a*, p. 159; 1890*b*, p. 207), although contemporaneous watercrafts were single-hulled. The burial ritual thus reflected traditions of the past, when double canoes were common in ISEA. This, and the pre-metal-age origin of the tradition, is confirmed by the dispersal of the boat-coffin burial in Oceania up to as far as Hawaii (Holmes 1981, pp. 157–59).

Noteworthy is also a connection with the contemporaneous dispersal of the protoform doublets for “boat”. For example, borrowed reflexes of EAn **qabaŋ* became a word for “coffin” in some Central-Bahnaric Mnong-Sre dialects spoken in the Mekong basin:

- Biat-Mnong *ʔbaŋ*, Sre *gəbaŋ* “coffin”

(Shorto 2006, p. 205, #633)

These are not MP, but Mon-Khmer languages. There also are other examples of such word borrowing which suggest contacts with Western MP speakers sailing up the Mekong (Mahdi 2010). The custom of boat-coffin burial, meanwhile, also involved the doublet **ban̄kaʔ*, as evidenced by Mori *ban̄ka* “boat, coffin” (Esser 1926, p. 42).

The boat-coffin custom led to the emergence and development of a metal-age ship-of-the-dead cult, with characteristic graphic icons in MSEA and ISEA.²⁸

This distribution of boat-coffins and the ship-of-the-dead cult over a widespread area encompassing both MSEA and ISEA fits well with the concept of a Trans-South-China-Sea maritime trade network

²⁸ See Goloubew (1929); Steinmann (1939, pp. 160–82 and plates 71–78); Bernet Kempers (1988, pp. 143–62, 586–87), see Mahdi (1994, p. 459).

described above. However, although this advancement of maritime mobility at first probably involved the earliest form of MP watercraft, the double canoe, the graphic ship-of-the-dead icons—representing a later metal-age phase—show single-hulled watercraft (without outriggers) instead. Were it not for the coffin forms in Tanimbar, one would even question that boat-burying sailors of double-canoes had ever been involved in ISEA.

6. Advance of Maritime Proto-Globalization into the Indian Ocean

That maritime communication and trade from ISEA also spread into the Indian Ocean is meanwhile well known (Solheim 1980, p. 334; Manguin 1996; 2004; Bellina and Glover 2004, pp. 73–80). It seemed clear that Malayo-Polynesians had played a central role (Mahdi 1999b, pp. 169–70, 177–80).

However, maritime mobility now appears not to have been originally initiated by Austronesians, but that the technology essential for it was apparently developed and passed on to them by Negritos. One must presume, therefore, that Negritos or other Australoids had not only moved northwards, but also westwards into and across the Indian Ocean. This could have happened in successive stages on rafts, then multiple dugouts, and finally double canoes (Mahdi 2016, pp. 36–39).

One noteworthy parallelism is the semantic shift of a word for “boat, trough” to mean “coffin” in some Tibeto-Burmic languages, particularly since it possibly involves a borrowing of the same EAn **qaban* “boat”:

- Proto-Kukish **r-Kuan* > Mikir Kukish, Naga Bari *k’oŋ*, Banpara Naga *k’uŋ* “trough used as a coffin or as a canoe”
- Garo *riŋ-kon* “trough”, Middle Burmese *k’oŋ*, Rawang (a.k.a. Krangku) *k’ōŋ-si*, Tamalu *goŋ-si* “boat”

(Shafer 1974, pp. 406, 427)

This repetition of the same semantic shift suggests that seafarers practising burial in boat-shaped coffins not only sailed up the Mekong, but also up the Salween, Irawaddy, Ganges and Brahmaputra. However,

the maritime communication which resulted in the transmission of this linguistic feature already involved speakers of Malayo-Polynesian (**qaban* being Early Austronesian), and not anymore pre-Austronesian Negritos.

The westward extent of the maritime communication network seems to reach rather far, to perhaps already proceed around Cape Comorin into the Arabian Sea at a very early time. Stargardt (1979, pp. 20–22) reports the earliest appearance of iron as well as onyx beads (of South Asian origin) at Taungthaman, Myanmar, in the fifth century BCE, and notes the appearance of the same two artefact types at Ban Chiang, Thailand, and in the Tabon caves in Palawan, the Philippines. The author stressed that the cited artefacts were late exotic introductions into a local culture which showed unbroken continuity from the preceding Neolithic. Hence, these were neither new settlements of immigrants from South Asia, nor even reflect adoption of Indic religious culture by local communities. Unfortunately, iron and onyx cannot tell us who had brought them to the sites at which they were found.

Concrete evidence of westward maritime communication and migration of an even much earlier period, i.e. involving either Negrito or other Australoid peoples, is the transmission of the banana and the coconut.

The *banksii* subspecies of the *Musa acuminata* Colla (genome A) banana had already been deliberately planted by 6,950–6,440 BP at the Kuk Swamp in Papua New Guinea, as shown in archaeological studies by Denham et al. (2003, p. 192), confirmed by Haberle et al. (2012). Domestication over several millennia led to seedless varieties and generation of an at first diploid (AA), then to further diploid and triploid (AAA) cultivars involving also another subspecies, the *M. acuminata* ssp. *errans* (Denham and Donohue 2009, p. 18). Cross-breeding with another species, *M. balbisiana* Colla (genome B), apparently native to MSEA as well as ISEA, led to AB diploids, then to AAB and ABB triploids (ibid.).²⁹ *M. acuminata*-generated cultivars had apparently been

²⁹ Previously, the now obsolete terms *Musa sapientum* L. and *M. paradisiaca* L. were used for varieties of the edible banana. Meanwhile, *Musa* × *paradisiaca* seems to be

transmitted westwards via ISEA to South Asia already before the MP dispersal (Donohue and Denham 2009; Perrier et al. 2011).

The apparently oldest set of cognates—assigned by Denham and Donohue (2009, pp. 23–25) to a protoform **muku*—is distributed over languages of New Guinea, further Melanesia, and East Indonesia (see Donohue and Denham 2009, p. 303, Figure 10, p. 308, Figure 15, red and yellow). The distribution encompasses languages of mutually not affiliated Trans-New Guinean and MP, so the cited **muku* cannot be a protoform in the strict sense. Denham and Donohue (2009, p. 14, Figure 4) propose a scheme of phonological development which, in view of a still lacking reconstruction of Proto-Trans-New Guinean historical phonology, inevitably remains impressionistic.

Considering the place of original domestication of the banana in PNG, cognates in Papuan languages of East New Guinea are more likely to represent directly inherited reflexes, and for these I am inclined to propose a protoform like **mug[u]* or **mog[u]*, compare.³⁰

Trans-New Guinean /

/ Southeast Papuan / Yarebanic: Yareba *mo*, Moikodi *moʔo*;

/ Madang /

/ Croisilles: Utu *mug*, Samosa *mogu*, Mosimo *mugu*;

/ Rai Coast /

/ Peka: Sop *mug*, Danaru *mungu*;

/ Minjim: Anjam *munge*, Male *mungo-l*, Bongu *muga*;

/ Bosavi: Kaluli *magu*;

/ West Trans-New Guinean /

/ Timor-Alor-Pantar /

/ Alor-Pantar /

/ Alor: Kui *moga-l*, Woisaka *moge-r*, Kabola *moʔo-y*;

/ Pantar: Lamma *maʔa* ~ *mag-gi*, Teiwa *muχu-l*;

a common term for A&B-triploid cultivars.

³⁰ Here (as in further lists) only a representative listing is shown, based on Denham and Donohue (2009, pp. 24–25, Tables 2 and 3) and Perrier et al. (2011, online Suppl. Table S4), who accumulated a remarkable collection of lexical data. I have revised some of the transcriptions for the sake of uniformity. The subclassification of Trans-New Guinean—provided here to elucidate the geographical distribution—follows the Summer Institute of Linguistics' (SIL) *Ethnologue*.

/ Tanglapui *maka*;
 / Oirata *mu*;
 / Timor: Fataluku *mu*, Makasae *muʔu*;

West Papuan / West Bird's Head: Tehit *oga* 'banana'.

Already in the Papuan languages considered above, horizontal dispersal by borrowing must have played a certain role, because primeval dispersal of banana cultivars probably postdated the first split of Proto-Trans-New Guinean. This is all the more so for MP cognates which must evidently reflect a Papuan substrate or adstrate in the respective languages (cf. Denham and Donohue 2009, p. 26), probably involving several parallel acts of Papuan-to-Austronesian lexical transmission:³¹

- (5) Manggarai *muku*, Li'o *muku*, Sika *muʔu*, Lamaholot *muko*, Kemak *mu*, Aputai *mu*, Kisat *muʔu*, Fordata *muʔu*, Kai *muk* ~ *muʔu*, Batuley *mug*, (7) Erokwanas *maʔo*, Ura *ya-mek*, (8) Kokota *muku*, Sie *ya-moʔ*, Aneityum *na-mek*, Kumak *mugi-c* "banana"

(Calon 1891, p. 204; Verheijen 1984, p. 61; Perrier et al. 2011, online Suppl. Table S4 ##63–104).

The relatively scarce traces in languages of further Melanesia, which however include a reflex in Kumak in New Caledonia, suggests that the Trans-New Guinean borrowing was carried southwards by the Qata, i.e. before the influx of the Tau who transmitted reflexes of a different protoform for "banana" which will be considered below.

Remarkable are possible cognates in Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages in South Asia, as well as in other languages further west, as indicated by Hoogervorst (2013a, p. 56) who elicited many of the cognates cited below.³² I begin with the Sanskrit cognates and their reflexes:

³¹ The same enumeration of Austronesian distribution areas as above is used here, see footnote 23.

³² Some are also from Perrier et al. (2011, Table S4 ##107, 789–91, 920, 924–25, 941) who assign all but #107 ("Pali *mokkha*, *moca*") to an either undefined or Arabic precursor. In early sources, the banana is sometimes referred to as "plantain", which will be rendered here as "banana".

Sanskrit *moca* “juice of a tree, Moringa Pterygosperma,³³

Musa Sapientum”³⁴ ~

~ *mocā* “Musa Sapientum, cotton shrub,³⁵ indigo plant,³⁶ Hingtsha

Repens,³⁷ banana [fruit]” ~

~ *mauca* “banana [fruit]” (Monier-Williams 1899, pp. 835–36) >

> Prakrit *mocā*, Hindi *mocā*, Bengali *mocā*, Kusunda *motsa*,³⁸ Aramaic *m'w'z'ā* (𐤌𐤍𐤕), Farsi *mawz* ~ *mūz*, Arabic *mawz* ~ *mūz*, Kurdish *moz* ~ *mūz*, Turkish *muz*, Amharic *muz*, Somali *mōs[-ka]* ~ *mūs[-ka]* “banana”, Swahili *mazu* “k.o. banana”.

These reflexes do not seem to result from parallel Papuan or MP borrowings. Turner (1966, p. 597, #10348) cites Sanskrit *mocā* as common precursor of the Middle and New Indo-Aryan cognates. Besides a specific reference to the banana plant or fruit, the Sanskrit doublets reportedly also referred in some primary sources to various other plants, but this may at least in part be due to uncertainties in the interpretation of source texts. Considering that inherited Middle and New Indo-Aryan reflexes, and also borrowed cognates in other languages all mean “banana”, this must also have been the basic meaning of the Sanskrit forms.

The cited cognate in Kusunda (an almost extinct isolate of Nepal) must be of Indo-Aryan provenance; Löw (1881, p. 336) names Sanskrit as donor of the Aramaic cognate (which does not yet occur in Talmudic texts), and Steingass (1892, p. 1344) notes the same for Farsi. From the latter it apparently entered Arabic, and from that further into African

³³ That is *Moringa pterygosperma* Gaertn. = *M. oleifera* Lam., the drumstick or horseradish tree.

³⁴ That is the edible banana plant.

³⁵ *Gossypium arboreum* L., native in particular to the South Asian Subcontinent.

³⁶ *Indigofera tinctoria* L., the original source of indigo dye.

³⁷ That is *Hingtsha repens* Roxb., an obsolete denomination of a surface-creeping, also water-floating, plant used in traditional medicine, apparently *Enhydra heloncha* Dc. or *E. fluctuans* Lour.

³⁸ Watters (2006, p. 146) cites Kusunda *motsa*, while Rana (2002) has Kusunda *mucha*, and lists Tibeto-Burman cognates: Central Magar *mocha*, Tamang *moje*, Dura *muja*, Gurung *mach* “banana”.

languages. Johnson (1959, p. 265) notes the Arabic cognate as precursor of the semantically particularized Swahili cognate. The Kurdish and Turkish cognates could be from either Farsi or Arabic. Altogether, the entire above-cited cognate set appears to ultimately derive from Sanskrit *mocā* ~ *mauca*.

Meanwhile, the unspecific plant reference of the apparently original Sanskrit *moca* ~ *mocā* (masculine ~ feminine) set matches better with possible Dravidian cognates cited by Hoogervorst (2013a, p. 56), compare:

- Tamil *mōttai* “unblown flower of banana, fragrant pandanus,³⁹ a.o.”, Kannada *mōte* “leaf-like envelope around inflorescence of the banana, coconut, or fragrant pandanus”, Tulu *mōte* “banana inflorescence”

(Burrow and Emeneau 1984, p. 464, #5138).

Bananas are not “plucked” individually, but the entire bunch, growing from one inflorescence “bud”, is chopped at the stem and taken as a whole. Hence, reference to either the inflorescence or the fruit involves a relatively light semantic shift. Leaving aside secondary reflexes of the Sanskrit forms, the above cited cognates are not widely spread in the respective language phyla, and probably do not reflect an either Proto-Indo-Aryan or Proto-Dravidian original. The non-specific semantic reference may result from the word being acquired from coastal seafarers. Until there is further confirmation that the Indian and New-Guinean cognate sets are mutually related, one must provisionally also consider the possibility of a coincidental phonological similarity, particularly in view of the wide gap between the respective dispersal areas. I will return to this below.

Another probable dispersal of a word for “banana” involves a cognate set with less semantic variation, assigned in Perrier et al. (2011, online Suppl. Table S4 ##576–596) to a protoform **baule* (perhaps **baulai* ?), compare:

³⁹ *Pandanus verus* Kurz = *Pandanus odorifer* (Forssk.) Kuntze.

West Papuan / North Halmahera–Bird’s Head:

Galela *bole*, Loloda *bole*, Abui *balēy*;

Malayo-Polynesian / Western Oceanic /

/ Suau: Saliba *baela*;

/ New Britain: Lamogai *obul*;

Dravidian:

Tamil *vārai*, Malayalam *vāra*, Kannada *bāre*, Kodagu *bāḷe*, Tulu *bārè ~ bālè*

(Burrow and Emeneau 1984, p. 486, #5373);

Indo-Aryan:

Sanskrit *vāra-buṣā ~ vāra-bṛiṣā* “banana”

(Monier-Williams 1899, p. 943 s.v. *vāra*₂).

Here we have a comparable dispersal gap as in that of the previously considered set, and the form is similarly reflected in several Dravidian languages, although in only one Indo-Aryan—Sanskrit. Whereas the assumed dispersal of the former cognate set west of PNG advanced along the south of East Indonesia through Nusa Tenggara, that of the latter set apparently followed soon after that along the north, through Halmahera. To my mind, the parallelism in the dispersal of the two assumed cognate sets increases the credibility of the first-considered one. Furthermore, the dispersal of the second set may have been the reason of the semantic shifts which the Indic cognates of the first set underwent.

The reason of the dispersal gap between East Indonesia and South Asia is probably the very early time of the transmissions, and that cognates in the intermediate areas were subsequently displaced by other words for “banana”.

Amongst these are items of a somewhat complicated set of banana terms, assigned by Donohue and Denham (2009, p. 303) to an ultimate protoform **qaRutay* with intermediate doublets cited as **taloy ~ *kaloy ~ *kela ~ *kola ~ *loka*⁴⁰ (see Perrier et al. 2011, online Suppl.

⁴⁰ Cognates directly reflecting **qaRutay* are restricted to the Philippines.

Table S4 ##446–540). It would need too much space to consider the relationship between all the apparent doublets. With regard to a possible westward transmission across the Bay of Bengal, only a set of doublets which I provisionally reconstruct as **loka* ~ **kalo* ~ **kula* needs to be inspected. I begin with reflexes in MP languages, using the same areal numeration as defined in footnote 23:

- (3) Mandar *loka*, Baree *loka*, Kulawi *loka*?, Banggai *loʔa*, (4) Karo-Batak *galuh*, Toba-Batak *gaol*, Simalur *kaol* ~ *xaol* ~ *haol*, (5) Bima *kalo*, Kambera *kalu*, (6) Banda *kula*, Asilulu *kula*, Haruku *kura*, Sawai *loke* “banana”

(Kähler 1961, p. 97; Perrier et al. 2011, *ibid.*, ##461–471, 486–492).

The westward dispersal of cognates through languages of sections (5) and (4) fits well with the westward movement of the Qata (see the unfilled arrow in the lower left of Figure 8.3, and cf. Nothofer 1994), and thus proceeded later, already within the period of the MP migration. West of the Bay of Bengal, reflexes of the apparently cognate doublet, **kela*, presumably brought over by the Qata, indeed do not appear to include Middle Indo-Aryan or earlier cognates, and are thus more recent than those of the previously inspected sets:

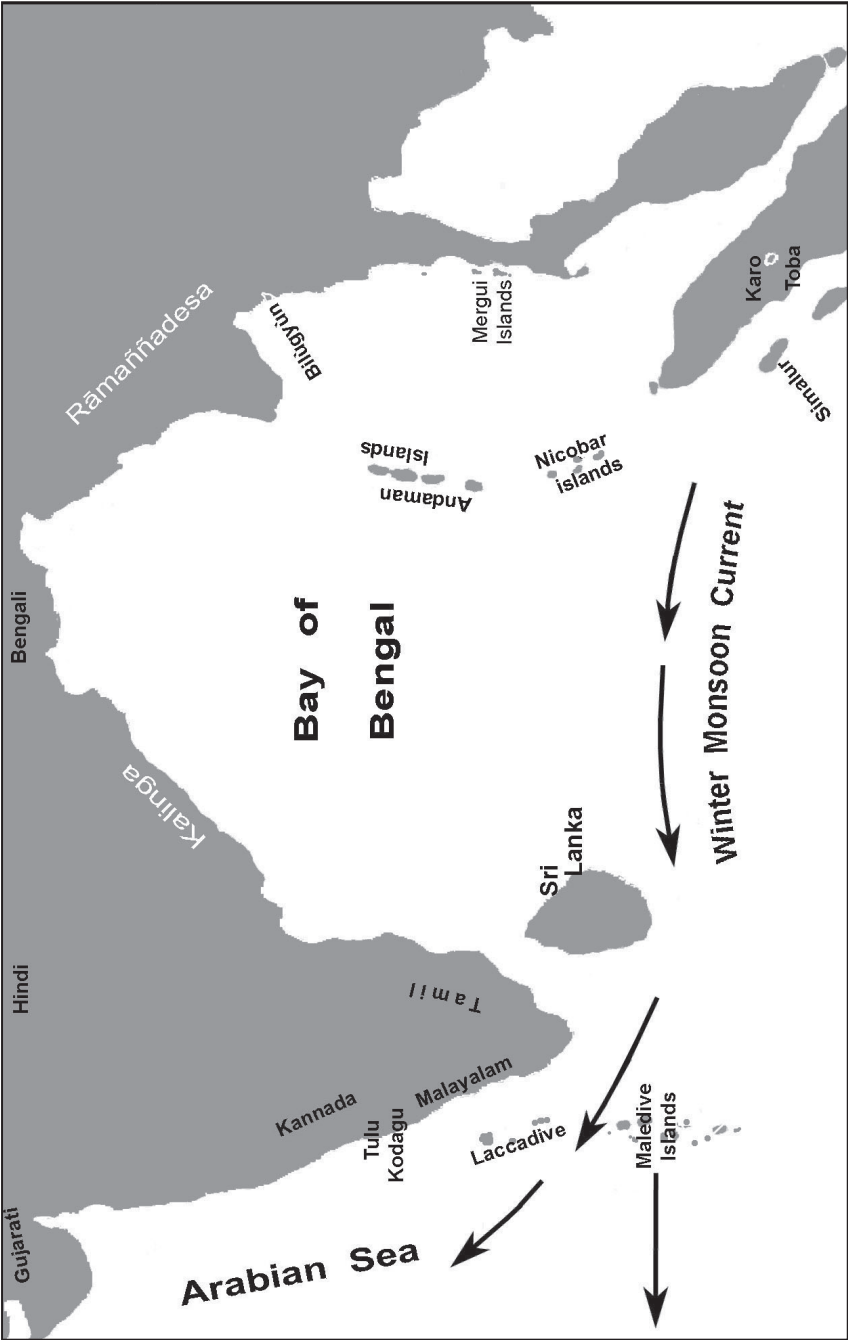
- Bengali *kola*, Nepali *kerā*, Hindi *kelā*, Pashto *kelā*, Farsi *kīla*, Sindhi *kīla* “banana”.

(Perrier et al. 2011, *ibid.*, ##496–506).

Whereas the two earlier cited forms first reached Dravidian languages of South India, apparently brought across by seafarers on primeval watercraft—perhaps rafts—using the westward Winter Monsoon Current (see Figure 8.4), the presently inspected transmission reached India further north, being perhaps introduced into Kalinga (also shown in Figure 8.4).

It seems important to support the conclusion on earliest dispersal of the banana to the South Asian subcontinent, drawn above on the basis of linguistic data, by independent archaeological evidence. Indeed, the dispersal routes of the respective words for “banana” into India appears to conform with the distribution of particular di- and triploids. De Langhe et al. (2009, p. 170, Figure 3) report a high density of the

FIGURE 8.4



The Bay of Bengal, Scene of Early Westward Transmission of the Banana and the Coconut to the South Indian Periphery
Source: Author.

AB diploid around the southern tip of India, while that of the later AAB and ABB triploids is spread along the east coast of India till as far north as the Ganges delta. This suggests that the borrowing of the two first above-mentioned banana-words into Dravidian languages coincided with the transmission of the AB diploid, while the later introduction of **kela* cognates to India accompanied the transmission of the triploids.

Of interest is also the dispersal of the **taloy* ~ **kaloy* doublets, which includes Mon-Khmer and Tai-Kadai languages of the mainland (Perrier et al. 2011, *ibid.*, ##446–460) and possibly involved the dispersal of *Musa balbisiana* Colla hybrids, but requires too much space to peruse here. Noteworthy in the same connection is another “as-if” protoform with a distribution which conforms to that of *M. balbisiana*, reconstructed by Donohue and Denham (2009, pp. 300–1) as **baRat*. MP reflexes are restricted to the Philippines and the northern half of Borneo/Kalimantan, but do not strictly follow regular sound correspondences, so that one must postulate effective protoform doublets:

**baRat* ~ **balat* ~ **balak* > (2) Kapampangan *balat*, Isneg *bāgat*, Bikol *batag*,⁴¹ Ifugao *bālat*, (4) Tanjong *balat*, Melanau *balak*, Bintulu *balak*, Lara’ *barak*

(Perrier et al. 2011, online Suppl. Table S4 ##1–25).

With regard to reflexes assigned to **balak*, one could assume final *-k* of the original transcription to denote final glottal stop, but several more cognates are rendered with final *-k* in Ray (1913, p. 72, #7 and p. 156, #7) so that a final velar probably is indeed implied.

The cognate set is noteworthy in view of its dispersal to Mon-Khmer languages of the mainland (Perrier et al. 2011, *ibid.*, ##26–57), reflecting the effective protoform doublets **pərāt* ~ **pəriāt*.⁴²

⁴¹ With **R/*t* metathesis.

⁴² In two-register languages, “normal” and “breathy” articulation is indicated by a subscript L or B. They imply an historical voiceless and voiced initial consonant respectively.

- (Old and Modern) Mon *brāt*, Nyakur: *phrāt_B*; Bru: *priat_B*; Sou: *pariat*; Halang *priat*, Chrau *prīt*, Bahnar *prīt*, Kui *prīt_L*,
(Shorto 1971, p. 275; 2006, p. 304, #1070; Peiros 1996, p. 52, #763; Sidwell 2000, p. 85, #294).

With exception of Mon which had been the paramount language of the Mon kingdom of Ramaññadesa, the Mon-Khmer languages having cognates are located along the middle course of the Mekong. Hence, the overall distribution of reflexes of the MP and Mon-Khmer doublet sets suggests an original dispersal in the Trans-South-China-Sea trade network discussed above. The Mon cognate could be the result of secondary transmission through the territorial network of Ramaññadesa.

The list provided by Perrier et al. (2011, online Suppl. *Table S4*) includes many more cognate sets, but besides requiring too much space to discuss here, they are less significant for the immediate subject of this chapter. Suffice it to consider just one MP protoform for “banana” with the widest dispersal of reflexes, apparently transmitted by the Tau, amongst others also into West Papua:

- **pu[n]ti* > (2) Palawan-Batak *punti*, Kalamian-Tagbanwa *punti*?, (3) Tontemboan *punti*, Sa’dan-Toraja *punti*, (4) Merina-Malagasy *funtsi*, Lampung *punti*, Old Javanese *punti*, Tarakan *punti*, (5) Manggarai *punti*, Leti *udi*, (6) Bonfia *fudi*, (7) Arguni *fud*, Irarutu *fude*, Yamdena *fundi*, (8) Fiji *vudi*, Samoa *futi* “banana”

(Dempwolff 1938, p. 123; Reid 1971, p. 49, #13; Smits and Voorhoeve 1992, pp. 207–8; Wolff 2010, pp. 945–46; Perrier et al. 2011, online Suppl. *Table S4* ##165–445).

The dispersal of **pu[n]ti* is probably the principal (though not exclusive) cause of apparent gaps in dispersals of earlier words for banana.

There is not as much lexical data to trace the westward dispersal of the coconut (*Cocos nucifera* L.), as it is with the banana. It may be significant, however, that the Sanskrit *Rāmāyaṇa*, attributed to Vālmīki, mentions amongst the Vanara (*vānara*, lit. “ape, monkey”) peoples, recruited by King Sugriva for his military campaign, also one who ate coconuts (Mankad 1965, p. 238; see also Mahdi 1999b, p. 168):

4.36.25 On the Milky Sea's beach, and in *tamāla* woods live,
and of coconuts eat, their number is countless.⁴³

The Milky Sea of Sanskritic literary tradition is the Bay of Bengal, so that the peoples who ate the coconut (*nārikela*)⁴⁴ lived on the Indian east coast. The cited passage, implying that eating coconuts was still uncommon or exotic enough to serve as distinctive feature of an ethnic group, must evidently originate from long before the turn of the Common Era. Indeed, the coconut must have already been transmitted around Cape Comorin around the beginning of the first millennium CE, because by 120 CE the Saka Ushavadata⁴⁵ reportedly granted coconut plantations to Brahmins on the west coast (Kosambi 1965, p. 189). The South Indian periphery (including Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Laccadives) was the last to be incorporated into the culture sphere reflected in classical Sanskrit literature, so a feature considered exotic in that literature may actually not have been novel in the South.

With regard to Austronesian languages, the protoform **nieuR*⁴⁶ “coconut” is practically not reflected in languages of Taiwan, but only in Malayo-Polynesian languages:

* *nieuR* > (2) Ivatan *nioy*, Inibaloi *niyog*, (3) Sangir *niuḥəʔ*, To Bungku *nii*, (4) Krui-Lampung *niwi*, Madurese *neyɔr*, (5) Sawu *ñiu*, Kai *nuer*, (6) Kamarian *niwer*, Bonfia *nuos*, (7) Sobei *niwe*, Molima *niula*, (8) Bugotu *niu*, Hawaii *niu* “coconut”

(Dempwolff 1938, p. 108; Reid 1971, p. 62, ##53–54; Sneddon 1984, p. 95; Mahdi 1998, pp. 394–95; Wolff 2010, p. 906).

⁴³ The Sanskrit original: *kṣīrodavelānilayās tamālanavāsinaḥ / nārikelāsana ścauva teṣaṁ saṁkhyā na vidyate* (4.36.25 in Mankad 1965, who also cites the location in other editions: Goresio 4.37.22, Bombay 4.37.21, Lahore 4.30.21).

⁴⁴ The *tamāla* tree and some other items in the passage are discussed in Mahdi (1999b, pp. 166–69).

⁴⁵ Also known as Rishabhadatta, a viceroy of apparently Scythian descent on the west coast of India.

⁴⁶ Stresemann (1927, pp. 82–83) had **niuəR* (**niueR* in modern transcription) to account for some Maluku reflexes; Dyen (1953, pp. 13, 15, n. 49) had **ñiuR* to account for initial *ñ* in some other cognates. Mahdi (1999a, pp. 394–95) proposed to unite the two as **nieuR*, presuming *e/u* metathesis in the former, and **nie > ñi* fusion in the latter. An occasional *i/e* metathesis can also not be excluded.

The unique Taiwan reflex cited by Wolff (ibid.), Kavalan *nuzu* “coconut”, seems indeed, as noted by the author, to be a MP borrowing.

Words for “coconut” in Indic languages are not, however, borrowings of the MP form. As pointed out by Hoogervorst (2013b, pp. 73–74), Dravidian languages have cognates of Tamil *tēnkāy*, literally either “south fruit” or “sweet fruit”, while Sanskrit had *nārikela*, apparently from a Dravidian **nari* “fibre, rope” + **keṭ-i/a/u* “tree, bush”. Borrowed reflexes of this and the above-cited MP form practically accompany the further dispersal of the coconut, as noted by Gunn, Baudouin and Olsen (2011, p. 6). The authors also cite results of recent phylogeographic research which established two definitively different genotypes: the one Pacific-Ocean specific with an early dispersal covering the Malayan Peninsula, ISEA and New Guinea (so-called “Malesia”), termed group A; the other Indian-Ocean specific having an early dispersal in the South Indian periphery, termed group B. This seemed to suggest two separate domestications.

Even assuming a purely anthropogenic propagation of group A, and ignoring a very likely early “complicity” of Papuans, the dispersal of the group-A coconut must have happened at the latest during the Malayo-Polynesian migration into Near Oceania around 1,500–1,000 BCE (Pawley 1999, p. 112, map 4). Meanwhile, the coconut in India was practically unknown in the north before the writing of the *Rāmāyaṇa* (towards the end of the last millennium BCE). The dispersal of group B seems to have been restricted to the South Indian periphery until around 200 BCE. Indeed, results of further historiographic and archaeological research indicate that the coconut was cultivated in the South Indian periphery itself since around 1,000–500 BCE (Gunn, Baudouin and Olsen 2011, p. 6).

The limited South Indian dispersal area and low degree of variety in group B lets an independent descent of the group from a common (A-and-B) precursor in Gondwanaland⁴⁷ seem most unlikely. Indeed,

⁴⁷ The palaeogeographic supercontinent which broke up into Antarctica, South America, Africa, Madagascar, Australia, the Arabian Peninsula, and the South Asian

neither do biologists classify group B as a different subspecies, nor do geneticists refer to a separate group-B genome. Hence, the group-B genotype (within a common *C. nucifera* genome) apparently resulted from a relatively late mutation of a group-A original brought to Sri Lanka before 1,000 BCE. The assumption that floating coconuts were perhaps carried westwards by the Winter Monsoon current (see Figure 8.4) also seems unlikely, because the further transmission to Africa was evidently anthropogenic (see Gunn, Baudouin and Olsen 2011, p. 1). The most credible scenario seems to be that the group-B mutant appeared, and was exclusively retained, in the course of artificial selection within a relatively small and isolated group-A population brought across the Bay of Bengal by humans travelling on rafts, drifting along with the Winter Monsoon Current. In view of the early date, the transmitters were probably pre-Austronesian Negritos.

In general, the Bay of Bengal had been the scene of a lively exchange of cultivars between the South Asian subcontinent and ISEA (Mahdi 1998; Hoogervorst 2013*b*). The transmission of the banana and the coconut, reviewed above, appears to have occurred before the beginning of MP activity in the Indian Ocean. Of further interest may be some of the earliest transmissions within the period of MP activity, because the earliest Malayo-Polynesians on the scene must have been the Qata who were either Negrito or carried a substantial percentage of Negrito admixture.

In discussing the transmission of the banana above, the dispersal of the third cognate set (**loka* ~ **kalo* ~ **kula* ~ **kela*) across the Bay of Bengal seems to have already involved the Qata. In particular, reflexes were represented in Karo- and Toba-Batak which seem to also exhibit certain particularities in some other cognate sets (see Mahdi 2008, p. 135, footnote 76). A noteworthy example is the eastward transmission of Prakrit *java* “barley”,⁴⁸ which apparently proceeded in two phases. Besides the main transmission, reflected amongst others in Old Javanese

Subcontinent—the last common mainland before separation of the earliest distribution areas of coconut-groups A and B.

⁴⁸ *Hordeum vulgare* L.

jawa “foxtail millet”,⁴⁹ there must have been an earlier one with only a few individual reflexes. These are Karo-Batak *jaba* “foxtail millet” and Toba-Batak *jaba-ure* “sorghum”,⁵⁰ in which the reflexion of internal *v* as *b* betrays that the transmission was mediated by ancestors of the Moken (Mahdi 2009, pp. 75, 84).

A noteworthy feature of traditional Indic—i.e. Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Tamil, literature and lore were peoples referred to as Naga (*nāga*, literally “serpent, snake”) occurring along the northeastern till southwestern coast of the Bay of Bengal, and in Sri Lanka. Having perused a series of primary sources and commentaries, I concluded that the Naga were regarded as ferocious warlike peoples who were mobile on the sea, and typically inhabited islands, the sea coast, or the banks of rivers, were given to pillaging, piracy, or “cannibalism”, being also very non-uniform in level of culture development, from relatively “primitive” to relatively “civilized”, in the eyes of early Indo-Aryans and Tamils (Mahdi 1999b, pp. 169–82). Of all peoples in the wider region, only Malayo-Polynesians fit this description relatively well.

It should be noted here, that these Naga are not related to peoples previously referred to by that name above, speakers of the Tibeto-Burmic Kukish languages cited with regard to words meaning “coffin”. As for the presently discussed Naga of literary tradition, their distribution within India seems to overlap well with that of the banana AAB and ABB triploids assumed above to have been introduced together with the protoform **kela* by the Qata. Noteworthy, furthermore, is the following passage from the *Ādiparvan*, the first book of the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata*:

1.21.4 To the abode of the Naga, the lovely Ramaniyakaat at the lonely ocean bay, do take me there, oh dear Vinata.⁵¹

The toponym Ramaniyaka (*ramaṇīyaka*) apparently refers to the land of the Mons, referred to in Middle Mon as *Rāmaññadesa* (see

⁴⁹ *Setaria italica* (L.) P. Beauvois.

⁵⁰ *Sorghum bicolor* (L.) Moench.

⁵¹ The Sanskrit original: *Nāgānām ālayam bhadre suramyam ramaṇīyakam / samudrakuśāv ekānte tatra mām vinate vaha* (Sukthankar 1933, p. 135).

Figure 8.4), cf. also Old Khmer *ramañ* ~ *rmañ* “Mon” (Shorto 1971, pp. 317, 325). This implies that the Naga in question probably inhabited the Martaban coast, and this is noteworthy for several reasons.

Ptolemy located “Besyngite cannibals” (*bēsýngeitói anthrōpophágoi*) on the Martaban coast between the mouths of the Irrawaddy (*Témala*) and Salween (*Bēsýnga*) (see Coedès 1977, p. 52). Meanwhile, Luce (1965, pp. 145–46) called attention to an ancient Mon tradition that the Martaban coast was under constant threat of raids from the sea by *rakṣasa*-s, depicted as “cannibal demons”, termed “Malayan Vikings” by the author (see also Forbes 1878, p. 234). Luce believed these were the ancestors of the Moken of the Mergui Islands. Mokens were indeed seafarers since very early, and Moken *kaban* “boat, ship” (< EAn **qaban*) was apparently borrowed into Old Mon as *kḃaṇ* “ship” (Mahdi 2009, p. 82).

In Myanmar tradition, the *rakṣasas* of the Mons were called *bilù*, glossed in the dictionary of Judson (Stevenson and Eveleth 1921, p. 727) as “a kind of monster which eats human flesh and possesses super-human eyes”. There still is an island named Bilùgyùn (*gyùn* “island”) in the Gulf of Martaban immediately before Moulmein in the mouth of the Salween.

A tenth-century Buddhist treatise by the Kashmirian poet Kṣemendra, the *Bodhisattvāvadāna Kalpalatā*, notes that *nāga* “pirates” swore allegiance to Ashoka (ruled c. 269–232 BCE) when he converted to Buddhism (Mookerji 1912, pp. 113–15). This may perhaps be seen as earliest date of religiously or mystically motivated submission of Sea-People communities to a paramount monarchy. This feature is better known for later periods when such communities submitted to a likewise Buddhist Srivijayan paramount who threatened them with mystic curses, Old Malay *mangmang* (see Mahdi 2008, pp. 131, 133, fn. 70). Late manifestations of this relationship between Sea-People and (meanwhile Muslim) monarchies are recorded for the mid-nineteenth century (ibid., p. 135).

Apparently, in traditional literature throughout the South Asian subcontinent, *nāga* was a cover term which was also applicable to Sea-People (*Orang Laut*) freebooters and sea-nomads operating around the Gulf of Martaban and perhaps also in the Riau-Johore area. Littoral

regions around the Strait of Malacca, therefore, seem a likely place to locate the islands of the “cannibal” *nāgas*. Grierson (1906, p. 14) proposed that the *rakṣasas* or *bilu* of the Martaban coast may have been Negritos. The Sea People, many of whom speak dialects of Malay, and the Moken, are indeed in the main either Negrito or exhibit a substantial Negrito admixture. At the same time, they exhibit a similar equatorial complexion as the Qata, so that Tamil and Indo-Aryan observers would be likely to have grouped them together as “Naga”.

7. Conclusion

Mahdi (2016) cited archaeological and linguistic evidence, suggesting primeval development of maritime mobility in ISEA very much earlier than anywhere else in the world. During the rising sea levels (Late Pleistocene until Mid Holocene), retreating equatorial populations from the Sunda Shelf apparently developed the construction of their watercraft further, from rafts to multiple dugouts, and then to double canoes, which they brought northwards along the southeastern coast of China, and westwards across the Bay of Bengal. The double canoe was then introduced to other populations, which the migrating equatorial peoples (apparently ancestors of Negritos) met in the areas they reached.

During the last millennium BCE, the area between the South China Sea and the Bay of Bengal had apparently been the scene of further development of maritime communication and trade. In this, the decisive actors must have been Negritos, and perhaps also other Australoid peoples of ISEA. Already before that, however, Australoid peoples had apparently transmitted the banana and the coconut across the Bay of Bengal.

Towards the turn of the Common Era, Negrito and other Australoid peoples involved in sea communication in and from ISEA had apparently adopted MP languages, as was the case with the Moken. From this period onwards, a decisive role in maritime communication in the area would be played by Malay shipping, fetching cloves from North Maluku, nutmegs from Banda, and sandalwood from Nusa Tenggara, and

delivering these to China and India. I hope to have demonstrated that an initial role in the development of maritime mobility and communication networks had been performed by equatorial peoples of ISEA, in particular by peoples I have referred to as Negritos.

8. Last-minute Addition

When this chapter was already headed for printing, a remarkable article appeared (Soares et al. 2016), providing elaborate genetic evidence based on DNA tests, confirming that the dispersal of Malayo-Polynesians primarily involved equatorial populations of ISEA origin, with a secondary influx of mainland East-Asian peoples (and, I add, their language).

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9

THE ROLE OF “PRAKRIT” IN MARITIME SOUTHEAST ASIA THROUGH 101 ETYMOLOGIES

*Tom Hoogervorst*¹

1. Introduction

This chapter presents a novel contribution to the study of language contact between India and Southeast Asia, in particular the oft-neglected “Prakrit” or—more accurately—Middle Indo-Aryan (henceforth MIA) loanwords in Malay, Old Javanese and other languages of Maritime

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Southeast Asia.² To this end, I will call attention to 101 tentative instances of lexical borrowing and present new perspectives on the pre-modern dispersal of Indic culture and thought to Southeast Asia during the first millennium CE.³ As scholarship on the exchange of vocabulary between South and Southeast Asia has traditionally prioritized the role of Sanskrit and the associated “high culture”—including religion, state organization, art, architecture, literature and philosophy (cf. Gonda 1973; De Casparis 1997)—a focus on (North) India’s historical spoken languages may reveal more vernacular dimensions of interethnic contact, challenging scholars to reconsider the structure and nature of the maritime networks that have shaped Asia’s pre-colonial past.

Without wanting to delve too deep here into the history of scholarship on cultural contact across the Bay of Bengal,⁴ it is worth pointing out that historians and archaeologists frequently present linguistic arguments in support of one or the other macrohistorical scenario. In an attempt to understand the mechanism through which cultural influence from India gained foothold in early Southeast Asia, Van Leur (1934, p. 126) contended that if the region had been frequented predominantly by warriors (*kṣatriya*) or merchants (*vaiśya*), more vernacular elements would have been adopted—including the fully developed caste system (i.e. the *jātis*, not just the *varṇas*), craft industry, political organization, and Indian languages other than Sanskrit. He thus rejected the then prevailing notion of a “Hindu colonization”, as advocated by Mookerji (1912) and other scholars of the Calcutta-based Greater India movement, and suggested that the literary and magico-ritual “high civilization” of classical Southeast Asia had been introduced by a

² The use of the term “Prakrit”, i.e. *Prākṛta* ‘ordinary; vulgar; vernacular’, is somewhat anachronistic in this context; it is associated with and first documented in the *Kāvya* literature (Tieken 2008, p. 341), postdating the establishment of regular interethnic contact networks between South and Southeast Asia in the first centuries BCE.

³ This sociocultural process has often been termed “Indianization”, a somewhat controversial term implying a one-sided transmission of culture. Conversely, Hoogervorst (2013) elaborates on ancient Southeast Asian influence in South Asia.

⁴ See Acharya (2013) for a recent discussion and summary of scholarship on this topic.

relatively small number of Brahmins who had ingratiated themselves at the local courts. The notion—first advanced by Krom (1931, p. 90) and thenceforth commonplace in the field of early Southeast Asian history—that indigenous elites were actively and deliberately importing Indian traditions and adapting them to local preferences is essential to this idea. With regard to this issue, Bosch (1961, pp. 8–9) argues:

It goes without saying that the Indian foreigners, after their supposed settling in the Archipelago, did not speak Sanskrit—the sacred and scientific language which, most likely, they did not even understand—with the families founded by them or with the population, but that they made use of a Dravidian dialect or one of the vernaculars of Aryan origin. Now it is noteworthy that the great number of borrowed words of Indian origin in the Javanese, Balinese and Malayan languages show the pure Sanskrit form, thus proving their origin from a literary and learned *entourage*, while, at least in Javanese, the Prākṛt and Tamil words are almost completely lacking.

As the alleged paucity of vernacular influence, linguistic or otherwise, from South to Southeast Asia plays a prominent role in scholarly attempts to reconstruct the history of contact between these regions, it merits a renewed discussion. Taking up this challenge, the present study will commence with a brief treatment of MIA linguistic history. The first section addresses the phonological integration of Indic loanwords into Western Malayo-Polynesian (henceforth WMP) languages, specifically Malay. This will help increase our understanding of the expected sound changes of MIA loanwords upon their acquisition in Malay, Old Javanese, and other languages. I will then proceed to present a list of 34 tentative MIA loanwords in Malay in the second section. The third section postulates 22 MIA loanwords attested in Old Javanese and other WMP languages, but not in (modern) Malay. The fourth section calls attention to the oft-overlooked MIA phonological innovation of *k > g in the intervocalic position, listing 26 tentative loans in Malay and Old Javanese that display this feature and may therefore be classified as “Prakritisms”. The fifth section examines 19 tentative loanwords borrowed from sources representing a later developmental stage of Indo-Aryan: the New Indo-Aryan (henceforth NIA)

languages. In conclusion, the historical and socio-linguistic conditions through which MIA loanwords entered Southeast Asia will be addressed, suggesting some directions for further research.

2. MIA Linguistic History

It is important to first clarify what is meant by MIA and by “Prakrit”. Foremost, we are not dealing with a single linguistic entity. In its broadest definition, any Indo-Aryan language other than Sanskrit—in some instances even Old Javanese and Old Tamil—have been regarded as a “Prakrit” (cf. Tieken 2008, p. 346). The term MIA, on the other hand, specifically denotes a consecutive stage in linguistic development from so-called Old Indo-Aryan (henceforth OIA) into NIA. OIA became best known to us in the form of classical Sanskrit as codified by the grammarian Pāṇini in the fourth century BCE, by which time it had ceased to be a mother tongue and chiefly served literary and liturgical functions. From the third to the first century BCE, however, a diverse range of MIA languages were the only languages in epigraphic use, most notably on the Aśokan and *Śātavāhana* inscriptions, before they were gradually superseded by Sanskrit and a mixed Sanskrit-Prakrit idiom known as Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit (Edgerton 1985; Salomon 1998, p. 72; Tieken 2008, p. 340).

As had been the case with classical Sanskrit, several MIA varieties were codified in written form. The best known example is Pali (*Pāḷi*), the chief liturgical language of Theravāda Buddhism used mainly in Sri Lanka and on the Southeast Asian mainland, whose first unambiguous literary attestations appeared around the first century BCE. Several Indic loanwords in Khmer, Thai and other mainland Southeast Asian languages were transmitted through Pali.⁵ The quantity of phonological retentions attested in Pali suggests it was based on a relatively archaic stage of MIA language development (Woolner 1999, pp. 65, 72). In medieval times, some Sanskrit dramas and other literary

⁵ Nihom (1994) has postulated some instances of Pali influence on Old Javanese, but in this chapter I demonstrate that the proposed loanwords could have equally well been transmitted through other “Prakrits”.

compositions were partly written in the so-called “Dramatic Prakrits”, most notably Śaurasenī, Mahārāṣṭrī and Māgadhī. The main function of this usage was to mark certain characters—often women and peasants—as non-Sanskrit speakers, with the associated social stigmas (Tieken 2008, p. 347). Ardhamāgadhī, a variety based on the vernacular of Awadh in ancient Kosala, is considered to be a conservative form of Māgadhī with some grammatical influence from Śaurasenī (Woolner 1999, p. 6). It has been preserved through Jain literature and is also known as Ārṣam or “Jaina Prakrit”. On phonological grounds, Ardhamāgadhī corresponds to the “Prakrit” of the eastern Aśokan inscriptions—used around the Mauryan capital of Pāṭaliputra (modern-day Patna in Bihar)—which is therefore also known as Old Ardhamāgadhī (Salomon 1998, pp. 73–74). Modern Indo-Aryan languages of north-eastern India, such as Bengali, Assamese, Oriya, Bhojpuri and Maithili, are believed to go back to the same source.

The extent to which semi-artificial literary languages, such as Ardhamāgadhī and the “Dramatic Prakrits”, resemble actual mother tongues once spoken on the Indian Subcontinent remains a matter of uncertainty. We can be fairly sure that all these varieties were already archaic at the time they appeared in literary works (Tieken 2008, pp. 350–51). Historical linguistics can help to fill some of the remaining gaps in our knowledge of MIA, especially through a study of regular sound correspondences with OIA and modern Indo-Aryan languages (Pischel 1900; Turner 1966). The examination of MIA loanwords in Dravidian (Emenau and Burrow 1962) or WMP languages, as attempted here, can lead to additional insights in this area. A complicating factor in doing so is the lexical multilayeredness of most Indo-Aryan (and Dravidian) languages—featuring Sanskrit loans modified to the phonology of the recipient language (*tadbhava*) as well as “direct”, unmodified loans (*tatsama*).

Most etymological scholarship on Malay and other WMP languages virtually ignores the lexical influence from MIA languages. Jones’ standard work on loanwords in Malay (2007), for example, exclusively deals with Sanskrit, Tamil, Hindi and Persian as donor languages used on the Indian Subcontinent. Several Dutch indologists have mentioned in passing the existence of Prakritisms in Old Javanese (Kern 1869,

p. 10; Van der Tuuk 1881, p. 46; Gonda 1973, pp. 79–81), but this was rarely their primary focus of attention. To the best of my knowledge, De Casparis (1988) was the first scholar to dedicate a full paper to MIA influence in Old Javanese epigraphy, while Ensink (1978, pp. 179–80, fn. 8) postulated four Pali borrowings in Old Javanese (see examples 5, 18, 47 and fn. 11 of this chapter). However, none of the scholars engaged with this topic have called attention to sound correspondences and phonological history to gain a better understanding of the postulated MIA etyma under research. It is the aim of this chapter to fill that gap and to do so by focusing primarily on Southeast Asia's most widely spoken language, Malay, while also looking at Old Javanese and other languages.⁶

3. Phonological Integration

Compared to the languages of India, Malay has a relatively small phonological inventory. I will confine myself here to some introductory

⁶ Throughout this chapter, examples are taken from a wide range of languages in South and Southeast Asia. My sources have been: Acehnese (Djajadiningrat 1934), Angkola-Mandailing Batak (Eggink 1936), Ardhamāgadhī (Ratnachandraji 1977), Balinese (Barber 1979), Bengali (Biswas 2000), Bikol (Mintz 2004), Braj Bhāṣā (Snell 1991), Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit (Edgerton 1985), Bugis (Matthes 1874), Cebuano (Wolff 1972), Cham (Aymonier and Cabaton 1906), Gayo (Hazeu 1907), Gujarati (Karbhari 1898), Hindi (Platts 1884), Ibanag (Bugarin 1850), Ilokano (Rubino 2000), Javanese (Robson and Wibisono 2002), Kannada (Kittel 1894), Kapampangan (Buenaobra 2004), Karo Batak (Joustra 1907), Khmer (Headley et al. 1997), Madurese (Pawitra 2008), Mahārāṣṭrī (Jacobi 1886), Makasar (Cense 1979), Malagasy (Richardson 1885), Malay (Wilkinson 1932), Malayalam (Gundert 1962), Maranao (McKaughan and Al-Macaraya 1996), Marathi (Molesworth 1857), Minangkabau (Moussay 1995), Old Javanese (Zoetmulder 1982), Old Khmer (Jenner 2009), Old Malay (Coëdès 1930; De Casparis 1956), Oriya (Praharaḥ 1931–40), Pali (Rhys Davids and Stede 1966), Panjabi (Singh 1895), Persian (Steingass 1892), Salako (Adelaar 2005), Sanskrit (Monier-Williams 1899), Sinhala (Clough 1892), Sundanese (Coolsma 1913), Tagalog (Noceda and Sanlucar 1860; Ferrer 2003), Tamil (*Tamil* 1924–36), Telugu (Brown 1903), Thai (Haas 1951–present) and Toba Batak (Warneck 1977). I have modernized outdated orthographies, translated and transliterated glosses and truncated them where required. Obsolete botanical names have been updated to reflect the contemporary consensus.

notes. The voiceless palato-alveolar fricative /ʃ/ is written as <sy> in modern orthography. At the coda of a syllable, <k> is normally pronounced as a glottal stop /ʔ/. Written Malay does not differentiate between the close-mid vowel /e/ and the mid-central vowel or schwa /ə/, although I have chosen to do so in this chapter for purposes of clarity. Unlike many Indian languages, modern Malay lacks phonemic vowel length, gemination (except in compounds), aspiration, retroflex consonants and complex consonant clusters. Presumably, some of these features were retained in a now extinct variety or acrolectal register of Malay; the form of several Sanskrit loanwords in Malagasy and Tagalog reveals that speakers of Malay—through whom these borrowings must have entered these respective speech communities—pronounced Sanskrit loanwords more authentically when contact with India was still regular (Adelaar 1994). Early Old Javanese epigraphy generally demonstrates a broad familiarity with Sanskrit phonology, although we do not know how the language was pronounced in practice. It is worth pointing out that Javanese and Madurese still maintain a phonemic distinction between dental and retroflex stops, while many of the other “Indic” characteristics have disappeared.⁷ As the phonological integration of Indic loanwords into WMP languages has already been discussed in detail by Gonda (1973, pp. 355–413), I have confined myself to tabulating the author’s findings most relevant for the present study. Table 9.1 presents an overview of observed tendencies (some of which inconsistent) of sound change between Sanskrit etyma and their Malay derivatives.

It is noteworthy that the sociolinguistic prestige of Sanskrit often gave rise to restitution-driven hypercorrection or “hyper-Sanskritization”, i.e. using knowledge of regular sound innovations from Sanskrit to “Prakrit” in an attempt to revert these phonological processes; numerous previously unattested Sanskrit words have hence been “falsely” reconstructed by scribes and lexicographers (cf. Yakubovich 2010, pp. 322–24; Hoogervorst 2013, pp. 9, 103–4). This casts a new light

⁷ Aspiration and gemination in Madurese are in all likelihood internal developments unrelated to Indic influence.

TABLE 9.1
Integration of Sanskrit Loanwords into Malay (after Gonda 1973, pp. 355–413)

Sound Change		Example	
Definition	Formula	Sanskrit Etymon	Malay Reflex
Highering of close-mid vowels (back)	*o > u	<i>drohaka</i> 'mischief-doer' (cf. example 63)	<i>durhaka</i> 'treason, insubordination'
Highering of close-mid vowels (front)	*e > i	<i>velā</i> 'time of day, period'	<i>bila</i> 'when, time when'
Lowering of close vowels (back)	*u > o	<i>guha</i> 'cave'	<i>goa</i> 'cave'
Lowering of close vowels (front)	*i > e	<i>līna</i> 'lying or resting on, absorbed in'	<i>lena</i> 'sound sleep'
Plosivization of labiodental approximants	*v > b	<i>vañcana</i> 'cheating, deception, fraud'	<i>bancana</i> 'mischief-making, trouble'
Affricatization of word-initial voiced palatal approximants	*y > j/#_	<i>yantra</i> 'mechanical contrivance, machine, etc.'	<i>jantara</i> 'spinning wheel'
Voicing of word-initial voiceless velar stops	*k > g/#_	<i>kanisa</i> 'brass, bell-metal'	<i>gangsa</i> 'bell-metal'
Schwa substitution (pre-retroflex)	*VC > əC	<i>koṭi</i> 'ten million'	<i>kəti</i> 'hundred thousand'
Schwa substitution (pre-geminate) ⁸	*VC: > əC	<i>matta</i> 'excited with joy, in rut, insane'	<i>məta</i> 'mad or rutting, wild or excited'

Schwa substitution (pre-cluster)	$*V > ə/_CC$	<i>samasta</i> ‘combined, united, whole’	<i>samasta</i> ‘all, entire’
Schwa substitution (antepenultimate syllable)	$*V > ə/(C)_ (C)CV(C)CV(C)$	<i>bhagavan</i> ‘venerable; holy’	<i>bəgawan</i> ‘blessed, saintly, holy’
Homorganic nasalization (pre-stop)	$*C_{\text{stop}} > NC_{\text{stop}}/N\_V$	<i>upamā</i> ‘comparison, resemblance, similarity’	<i>umpama</i> ‘example, instance’
Deaspiration	$*C^h > C$	<i>bhūmi</i> ‘the earth, soil, ground’	<i>bumi</i> ‘earth, world’
Vowel-insertion in aspirated stops	$*C^h > CVh$	<i>bhāṣā</i> ‘speech, language’	<i>bahasa</i> ‘diction, language’
Metathesis of aspiration (word-initial)	$*V(C)_C^h > hV(C)_C/_\#$	<i>argha</i> ‘worth, value, price’	<i>harga</i> ‘price, money-value’
Metathesis of aspiration (word-medial)	$*C^hV_1(C_2)C_3V_2 > C_1ə(C_2)C_3(V_2)hV_2$	<i>bhāṇḍāra</i> ‘a storehouse’	<i>bəndahara</i> ‘treasurer’ (cf. example 3)
Metathesis of aspiration (word-final)	$*C^hV > CVh/_\#$	<i>dadhi</i> ‘coagulated milk, thick sour milk’	<i>dadih</i> ‘sour thick milk, clotted milk’

⁸ This sound change may have been influenced by the orthographic convention in Javanese and Malay to use gemination to indicate that the preceding short /a/ is a schwa (Ras 1968b). Indeed, intervocalic consonants following a schwa are typically longer in these and other WMP languages.

on certain sound changes attested in Sanskrit loanwords in WMP languages that were previously dismissed as irregular. Malay *cipta* ‘thought-concentration’ (cf. Javanese *cipta* ‘ideas; creation; to create’), for example, is normally perceived to be an aberrant form of *citta* in the same meaning, reflecting Sanskrit *citta* ‘thinking, imagining; aim, wish’ (e.g. Gonda 1973, p. 364; De Casparis 1997, p. 15; Jones 2007, p. 50). Since the Sanskrit consonant cluster /pt/ corresponds to /tt/ in MIA (Pischel 1900, p. 187), I would argue that *cipta* is a deliberate back-formation designed to make the word look more Sanskritic. In Old Javanese, *cipta* is indeed used alongside *citta* in the meaning of ‘mind, heart; thought, opinion’, although the former only occurs in later texts (cf. Zoetmulder 1982, p. 329). If this observation is correct, the mechanism has persisted into colonial times. The term *rindra* ‘lace-work, crotcheting?’ found in the Middle Javanese *Kidung Malat* appears to be a Sanskritization of Portuguese *renda* ‘lace’ (cf. Javanese *rendo* ‘lace edging, crocheting’, Malay *renda* ‘lace’) based on the development of MIA /dd/ from /dr/ (cf. Pischel 1900, pp. 185–86, 202). Along the same lines, we may explain Javanese *bludru* ‘velvet’ as a borrowing from Portuguese *veludo* in the same meaning (cf. Malay *bəlundru* ~ *bələdu*). Old Javanese “hyper-Sanskritisms” include *jaladri* alongside *jaladhi* ‘sea, ocean’ (from Sanskrit *jaladhi* ‘the ocean’)⁹ and *mandra* alongside *manda* ‘weak, faint, soft, gentle’ (from Sanskrit *manda* ‘slow, weak’).

Another relevant feature of particularly Javanese and Malay is the tendency to form secondary bases with *-i* out of words originally ending in *-a* (Gonda 1973, pp. 427–30; De Casparis 1988, p. 53). While alternation between /a/ and /i/ is well-documented in Sanskrit and other Indo-Aryan languages, depending on several morphological conditions, a number of WMP languages feature secondary “i-forms” of Indic loans unattested in their prototypes (Hoogervorst 2016). Consider, for example, Malay *bagi* ‘allotting’ (< Sanskrit *bhāga* ‘a part, allotment’), *biji* ‘seed, grain’ (< *bīja*), *puji* ‘praise, laudation’ (< *pūjā* ‘worship, veneration’) and *sunyi* ‘lonely, desolate’ (< *śūnya* ‘empty, desolate’). This process has become remarkably productive in modern Javanese, where numerous words in the

⁹ Only attested in the *Kuñjarakarṇa* (Zoetmulder 1982, p. 719).

high speech register, both borrowed and inherited, are formed through substitution of /a/ by /i/ in word-final position (a process sometimes referred to as *kramanization*). It should be taken into account when examining lexical influence from Indic languages to Southeast Asia.

Some phonological innovations are found both in MIA and WMP languages. Apheresis (omission) of the antepenultimate syllable, for instance, is attested in MIA languages as well as in Malay. It remains therefore uncertain whether Malay words such as *puasa* ‘fasting’ and *labu* ‘bottle gourd, calabash’, reflecting respectively Sanskrit *upavāsa* ‘a fast, fasting’ and *alābu* ‘the bottle-gourd (*Lagenaria siceraria* (Molina) Standl.)’, were introduced via a MIA language or lost their initial syllable due to internal historico-phonological developments in Malay. I will omit loanwords displaying sound changes attested in both language families,¹⁰ and I will also leave out words displaying a “dropped” word-final /s/; Gonda (1973, p. 419) demonstrates that Sanskrit stems ending in *-as* (corresponding to *-ah* in pausa) typically lose this word-final consonant in Javanese and Malay. Consider, for example, Malay *jasa* ‘loyal service, doing duty’ from Sanskrit *yaśas* ‘honour; an object of honour; favour, etc.’ (cf. Pali *yasa* ‘glory, high position’, Old Javanese *yaśa* ‘honour, glory; meritorious deed’, Old Khmer *yasa* ‘fame, honour, glory’), *tapa* ‘ascetic devotion’ from *tapas* ‘religious austerity, severe meditation’ (cf. Pali *tapa* ‘religious austerity, ascetic practice’, Old Javanese *tapa* ‘religious austerity, asceticism’, Old Khmer *tapah* ‘ardor, the fervor of religious austerities’) and *teja* ‘lurid sunset-clouds’ from *tejas* ‘point or top of a flame or ray, glow’ (cf. Pali *teja* ‘a (piercing) flame’, Old Javanese *teja* ‘point or top of a flame; glow, fire; fiery energy, spiritual or magical power’, Old Khmer *tejah* ~ *teja* ‘fiery energy, (religious) fervour’). While I am hesitant to attribute such attestations directly to MIA intermediacy,

¹⁰ Thus, the Old Javanese forms *jawa* ‘a grain’ (< Sanskrit *yava* ‘barley’), *soca* ‘precious stone, gem’ (< *śauca* ‘purity’) and *sona* ‘dog’ (< *śvāna*) may resemble MIA forms, but can equally well be explained through internal developments. The same holds true for modern Javanese *beyo* ‘cost, charge; customs, duty’ (< Sanskrit *vyaya* ‘spending, expense; cost; money’) and (lit.) *bomantoro* ‘heaven, sky’ (< *vyomāntara*); the latter is unattested in the Sanskrit literature, but evidently consists of *vyoma* ‘heaven, sky, atmosphere, air’ + *antara* ‘being in the interior, interior; near’ (Gonda 1938, p. 496; Jones 2007, p. 44).

we cannot exclude the possibility that contact between Southeast Asian and MIA speech communities gave rise to this phonological tendency.

4. MIA Loanwords in Malay

The Malay words listed below are presumably borrowings from one or more MIA sources.¹¹ Some examples have already been addressed by earlier scholars, in which case I have fine-tuned the argument by calling attention to MIA phonological innovations and textual attestations in support of their etymologies. Other tentative lexical transmissions are based on my own postulations.

1. *baja* ‘steel’ (cf. Old Javanese *waja*, Madurese *bejhø*, Karo Batak *baja*, Bugis *baja?*) has been connected to Sanskrit *vajra* (Rigg 1862, p. 364). Later dictionaries indeed define this word as ‘a kind of hard iron or steel’, next to its more familiar meanings of ‘thunderbolt’ and ‘diamond’ (Monier-Williams 1899, p. 913). The former shade of meaning also manifests itself through such compounds as *granthivajraka*, *śaivālavajra*, *śoṇavajra* and *svarnavajra*, all denoting types of steel (cf. Hoogervorst 2013, p. 26). As consonant clusters ending in /r/ have become geminated consonants in some MIA languages (Pischel 1900, pp. 197–98), we find Śaurasenī *vajja* (Schmidt 1924, p. 13), Māgadhī *vajja* (Pischel

¹¹ It is beyond the scope of this study to explore onomastics. Nevertheless, it is worth calling attention to a ninth or tenth century CE inscribed golden bowl found in the Riau province displaying the name *Lakhaṇi*, ultimately reflecting Sanskrit *Lakṣaṇī* (Griffiths 2012, pp. 210–11); this name would phonologically correspond to MIA *Lakkhaṇī*, which is indeed attested on a twelfth century stone inscription found near the Mahābodhi pagoda in Bagan, present-day Myanmar (Luce 1969, p. 107). Along similar lines, Ensink (1978, p. 180, fn. 8) argues that the spelling of the name *Poruṣāda* (rather than Sanskrit *Puruṣāda*) in the Old Javanese *Sutasoma* kakawin was due to Pali influence. Nihom (1994) argues that Old Javanese *Kāmaloka* ‘the world of desire’, attested in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century CE Buddhist didactic poem *Kuñjarakarnadharmakathana*, goes back to Pali *Kāmaloka* ‘worlds of sense desire’. Finally, the ethnonym *Goḍā* (e.g. in the fourteenth-century *Nāgarakṛtāgama*; Pigeaud 1962, p. 36), appears to reflect Ardhmāgadhī *Goḍa* ‘a resident of the Gauḍa country’. More examples may surface upon closer inspection of proper names, toponyms and ethnonyms.

1900, p. 198) and Mahārāṣṭrī *vajjavega* ‘having the swiftness of a thunderbolt or of lightning’.¹² I therefore propose a MIA origin of the above WMP attestations in the primary meaning of ‘steel’. Secondary to this development, WMP reflexes of this form also denote several solutions for dental treatment, which in Southeast Asia often contain iron (Wilken 1888; Zumbroich 2009, p. 391; Hoogervorst 2013, pp. 25–26), e.g. Old Javanese *waja* ‘the pieces of steel inserted in the mouth of a corpse as teeth, to get him beautiful teeth in a later incarnation’ (Van der Tuuk 1897–1912/3, p. 599), Malay *baja* ‘an oily preparation made from burnt coconut-shell and used to stain the teeth black’,¹³ Acehnese *baja* ‘a type of blacking to stain the teeth black’, Angkola-Mandailing Batak *baja* ‘blacking for the teeth’, Malagasy *vazana* ‘molar’, etc.

2. *bapa* or, more commonly, *bapak*¹⁴ ‘father’ (cf. Old Javanese *bapa* ‘father’, Salako *bapà?* ‘father (of somebody else)’, Tagalog †*bapa* ‘father, said to superiors’) has been interpreted by Adelaar (2004, pp. 167–69) as the (colloquial) Tamil *appā* ‘father’ in combination with the archaic prefix **b(a)-* ‘someone who fulfils the function of or behaves like ...’.¹⁵ While I find no grounds to discard this etymology, it is also worth calling attention to Ardhamāgadhi

¹² See *lāka* (example 43) on the degemination of long consonants (**vajja* > *baja*). Ardhamāgadhi *vāira* ‘thunderbolt’ is also related and may be compared to Tamil *vayiram* ‘thunderbolt, diamond’.

¹³ An older dictionary glosses “a metallic and perhaps antimonial preparation for giving a black colour to the teeth” (Marsden 1812, p. 30).

¹⁴ See Blust (1979) and Adelaar (1992, pp. 118–19) on the addition of a word-final glottal stop <k> to Malay vocatives.

¹⁵ Analogous examples given by the author are *bətina* ‘female’ (< **b(a)-* + **tina* ‘mother, woman’), *budak* ‘child, servant’ (< **b(a)-* + **uda* ‘youth’ + vocative -k), *babu* ‘female domestic help, maid-servant’ (< **b(a)-* + **(i)bu* ‘mother’) and *besan* ‘people whose children have intermarried’ (< **b(a)-* + **isa* ‘one’ + **(a)n*). The latter form is also attested, without the prefix **b(a)-*, as Salako *isātn* in the same meaning. We may also call attention to the following words for ‘father’: Minangkabau *apak*, Iban *apay* (Adelaar 1992, p. 119), Salako *apà?* ‘speaker’s father’, Acehnese *apa* and Angkola-Mandailing Batak *apa*, presumably reflecting the abovementioned Tamil precursor. The default proto-Austronesian reflex for ‘father’ is **ama*.

bappa ‘father’, with cognates in NIA languages but not in Sanskrit (Turner 1966 #9209), e.g. Sinhala *bapa* ‘father’, Oriya *bāpa* ‘father; one’s elder who is like one’s father’, Hindi *bāp* ‘father; senior, elder, superior’. It seems that the word could have equally well ended up in Southeast Asia through a MIA source. Old Khmer *vappā* ~ *vāppā* ~ *vapā* ‘father’ has been connected to a WMP source (Jenner 2009, p. 529), whereas Sanskrit *vapra* appears to be a back-formation of MIA **bappa*.

3. *bāndahara* ‘treasurer’ (cf. Javanese *bāndarō* ‘master, mistress; title for the nobility’), which was used as an administrative title in the old Malay states, reflects Sanskrit *bhāṇḍāgāra* ‘a treasury, a treasurer’ (Gonda 1973, pp. 96, 379; De Casparis 1997, p. 13; Jones 2007, p. 36). The borrowing presumably took place through a MIA source, e.g. Ardhamāgadhī *bhaṇḍāra* ‘a storehouse; treasury’. We may also compare late Sanskrit *bhāṇḍāra* ‘a storehouse’, Sinhala *baḍahæra* ‘storekeeper, man who takes care of a treasury, etc.’, Oriya *bhaṇḍāra* ‘treasury’ and Hindi *bhaṇḍārā* ‘store-house, depository, warehouse, etc.’. The intervocalic /h/ in the Malay attestation is due to metathesis of aspiration (cf. Table 9.1). Malay *bāndahari* ‘treasury officer’ (cf. Tagalog *bandahali* ‘housekeeper, manager’) is evidently related to *bāndahara*. Rather than assuming the former to be an “i-form” of the latter, *bāndahari* presumably entered Malay through an ultimately related NIA source, e.g. Hindi *bhaṇḍārī* ‘a house-steward, a treasurer’, Gujarati *bhāḍārī* ‘a treasurer’, Oriya *bhaṇḍārī* ‘a store keeper; a steward’ (Gonda 1973, p. 379).
4. *bārhalā* ‘(animistic) idol, image’ (cf. Javanese *br̥h̥olō* ‘giant; idol’, Gayo *bār̥l̥l̥* ‘idol’, Karo Batak *bārhalā* ‘k.o. ghost’, Makasar *barahala* ~ *barala* ‘idol’) reflects Old Javanese *bharāla*,¹⁶ which is used interchangeably with *bhaṭāra* in the

¹⁶ The same word features on the Malay Si Topayan I inscription (probably fourteenth or fifteenth century CE) as *brahala* ‘god’ (Griffiths 2014, p. 228).

meaning of ‘a great lord, venerable or worshipful person, deity, etc.’ (cf. Malay *batara* ‘god, male deity’, Javanese *batara* ‘male mythological deity’, Makasar *batara* ‘deity’, Tagalog *bathalà* ‘God’, Cebuano *bathálà* ‘God’).¹⁷ The latter set of attestations presumably reflects MIA *bhaṭṭāra* ‘a noble lord’—also known to Sanskrit lexicographers (Monier-Williams 1899, p. 745)—and ultimately Sanskrit *bhartr̥* ‘a bearer; a husband’ (cf. Pischel 1900, pp. 271–72). As the Old Javanese form *bharāla* is predominantly used to designate Buddhist deities (cf. Kern 1917; De Casparis 1988, p. 56; Griffiths 2014, p. 228), it has been suggested that the word entered Maritime Southeast Asia through Vajrayāna Buddhist connections particularly with Nepal (Kandahjaya 2004, pp. 68–69; Griffiths 2014, pp. 242–43); we find the form *bharāḍa* in archaic Newari (Chandra 1983; Lienhard 1996, p. 248), presumably reflecting Sanskrit *bhaṭṭāraka* ‘a great lord, venerable or worshipful person’. Griffiths (2014, p. 242) also calls attention to the name *Bharāḍa*, a sage in the Joko Dolog inscription, suggesting that Old Javanese *bhaṭṭāra*, *bharāḍa* (through metathesis) and *bharāla* all have MIA origins.

5. *biku* ‘Buddhist monk’ (cf. Old Javanese *wiku* ~ *biku* ‘a person who has a religious status or function, priest, monk, etc.’, Balinese *wiku* ‘learned man, doctor, priest’) corresponds to Sanskrit *bhikṣu* ‘a beggar; a Buddhist mendicant or monk’ (Jones 2007, p. 38) and must have entered Southeast Asia through a MIA source (Van der Tuuk 1897–1912/3, p. 502; Ensink 1978, pp. 179–80, fn. 8; De Casparis 1997, p. 13).¹⁸ We may call attention to

¹⁷ The corresponding female forms in Old Javanese are *bharālī* and *bhaṭārī* ‘goddess (esp. Durgā); title of a royal lady (only Kuntī, as queen-mother?)’. The Philippine attestations exhibit metathesis of aspiration (cf. Table 9.1).

¹⁸ In support of a MIA etymology, it should be pointed out that the Sanskrit cluster /kṣ/ normally yields Malay /ks/, e.g. Malay *laksa* ‘ten thousand’ (< Sanskrit *lakṣa* ‘hundred thousand’), *paksa* ‘compulsion’ (< *pakṣa* ‘opinion; a position advanced or an argument to be maintained; etc.’, cf. Old Javanese *pakṣa* ‘fixed intention, firmly bent on, wanting by all means, etc.’), *saksi* ‘witness’ (< *sākṣī* ‘eye-witness’) and *siksa* ‘punishment’ (< *śikṣā* ‘chastisement, punishment’).

Pali *bhikkhu* ‘mendicant monk’ and Ardhamāgadhī *bhikkū* ‘a beggar, an ascetic’; Old Khmer *bhikkhu* ‘Buddhist mendicant or monk’ has presumably been borrowed from Pali. The absence of aspirated consonants, which is expectable in Malay but not in Old Javanese, has led De Casparis (1988, pp. 65–66) to assume a transmission via Old Sinhalese *biku* ‘Buddhist monk’, found in Brāhmī inscriptions. There are, however, more attestations of the loss of aspirated consonants in Old Javanese, e.g. *caməṭi* ~ *cəməṭi* (example 29), *maṇjəṭi* (44) and *paṭāraṇa* (18).

6. *bilak* ‘the bael fruit (*Aegle marmelos* (L.) Corrêa)’ (cf. Balinese *bila*, Makasar *bila*, Bugis *bila*) ultimately goes back to Sanskrit *bilva* ‘the wood-apple tree (commonly called *bel*)’ (Gonda 1973, p. 326). Based on the assimilation of the /lv/ cluster, I propose that the borrowing took place via a MIA source, such as Ardhamāgadhī *billa* in the same meaning. The addition of a word-final glottal stop to Indic loanwords in Malay—other than vocatives—is irregular, but does not stand in isolation.¹⁹
7. *cula* ‘horn of single-horned animal’ (cf. Javanese *culo* ‘horn of a rhinoceros’) ultimately goes back to Sanskrit *cūḍa* ‘the hair on the top of the head’ (Gonda 1973, p. 101; De Casparis 1997, p. 16), also denoting ‘the crest of a cock or peacock’ in lexicographical works (Monier-Williams 1899, pp. 400–1). As the intervocalic /d/ developed into a liquid consonant in MIA (Pischel 1900, pp. 168–69), the borrowing into WMP languages presumably took place via Ardhamāgadhī *cūlā* ‘top’ or a related language.²⁰ Sanskrit lexicographers, too, list the form *cūla* (Monier-Williams 1899, p. 401).

¹⁹ We may compare *curik* ‘jungle knife’ (< MIA **churī* ‘knife’, cf. example 32), *manik* ‘bead’ (< Sanskrit *maṇi* ‘a jewel, gem, pearl’), *katik* ‘dwarfed’ (< Tamil *kaṭṭai* ‘that which is short, low, dwarfish’) and *capek* ‘tired, worn, weary’ (< Tamil *cappai* ‘that which is weak, lean, emaciated’). Mahdi (2000, p. 850) suggests that the post-glottalization of word-final vowels is due to interdialectal borrowing across Malay varieties.

²⁰ The MIA retroflex /ɭ/, which corresponds to an older /d/, tends to be written as /l/ in north Indian manuscripts (Pischel 1900, pp. 168–69).

8. *dəlīma* ‘pomegranate (*Punica granatum* L.)’ (cf. Old Javanese *dālīma* ~ *dalīma*, Madurese *dhəlīma*) goes back to Sanskrit *dāḍīma* ‘the pomegranate tree’ (Gonda 1973, pp. 322–23) through a MIA language, such as Ardhamāgadhī *dālīma*. The form *dālīma* is also attested in Sanskrit lexicographical works.
9. *gəmbala* or *gombala* ‘a man employed to look after animals’ has its ultimate origins in Sanskrit *gopāla* ‘protector of bulls (i.e. cowherd); earth-protector (i.e. king)’ (cf. Old Javanese *gopāla* ‘cowherd’). The voicing of the intervocalic /p/ is usually attributed to the influence of Tamil, in which non-geminated stops are normally pronounced as voiced fricatives between vowels. However, Tamil exhibits *kōpālan* ‘herdsman’, whose word-final nasal remains unattested in Malay. Instead, the borrowing may have taken place through a MIA source, such as Mahārāṣṭrī *govāla* (cf. Ardhamāgadhī *govāli* ‘a cowherd’, Hindi *gvālā* ~ *goālū* ‘a cow-keeper, cow-herd’). Tamil *kōvalar* ‘herdsmen’ (with word-final /r/ indicating plural) is presumably derived from the same MIA source. As regards the phonological development from MIA *govāla* to Malay *gəmbala*, we may point out that schwa substitution in the antepenultimate syllable, the plosivization of /v/ and the prenasalization of /b/ can all be explained in terms of internal developments (cf. Table 9.1).
10. *gəta* ‘dais, divan’ (cf. Acehnese *kətta* ‘bedstead, cot’) ultimately goes back to Sanskrit *khaṭvā* ‘a bedstead, couch, cot’. Based on the absence of the intervocalic /tv/ cluster, I propose that a MIA reflex, such as Ardhamāgadhī *khaṭṭa* ‘a cot’, gave rise to the above attestations.
11. *gula* ‘sugar’ (cf. Old Javanese *gula* ‘sugar; syrup’, Madurese *ghulē*, Makasar *golla*, Maranao *gola?*) goes back to Sanskrit *guḍa*, which has the primary meaning of ‘a globe or ball’ but is also used to denote ‘sugar which forms itself into lumps’, ‘dry sugar’ and ‘molasses’. The direct precursor of the WMP attestations must have been a MIA language, such as Ardhamāgadhī *gula* ‘molasses, treacle’. Sanskrit lexicographers, too, list *gula* ‘raw or unrefined sugar, molasses’ as an equivalent of *guḍa* (Monier-Williams 1899, p. 360).

12. *jaga* ‘being awake or vigilant’ (cf. Old Javanese *jaga* ‘watchful, vigilant, on one’s guard, etc.’, Madurese *jheghe* ‘awake, rise’, Tagalog †*dagá* ‘to watch’, Malagasy *zaha* ‘to investigate’) can be connected to a MIA form reflecting Sanskrit *jāgrat* ‘waking’ (cf. Kern 1869, p. 10; Gonda 1973, p. 106; De Casparis 1997, p. 19); Sanskrit /gr/ in intervocalic positions regularly corresponds to MIA /gg/ (Pischel 1900, p. 197). We may thus call attention to Ardhamāgadhī *jagga* ‘to remain awake, awake’ as a plausible etymon of the WMP attestations.
13. *juara* ‘trainer of fighting-cocks’ (cf. Javanese *juworo* ‘champion, number one, the best known’) seems to have originally referred to proficiency in games; an older Malay dictionary glosses ‘skilled at games, esp. cockfighting; referee in that game’ (Pijnappel 1863, p. 89). In the *Rambhāmañjarī*, a “Prakrit” work by the fifteenth century CE poet and playwright Nayacandra, we find the form *jūāra* ‘gambler’ (Naikar 1993, p. 233). Together with Oriya *juāra* ‘gamester, gambler’, this attestation would correspond to Sanskrit *dyūtakāra* ‘a gambler’—the loss of intervocalic stops is regular in late MIA (cf. Turner 1966 #6609).
14. *mānti* ‘official, civil servant’ (cf. Minangkabau *manti* ‘assistant of the *pənghulu* in the village administration’), is a by-form of the better known *māntəri* in the same meaning. Whereas the latter is derived from Sanskrit *mantrī* ‘a king’s counsellor, minister’ (Gonda 1973, p. 146; De Casparis 1997, p. 25), the former may have been borrowed through a MIA language in which the /r/ at the end of a consonant cluster is dropped (cf. Pischel 1900, pp. 185–86); Ardhamāgadhī exhibits *manti* ‘a minister, a counsellor’.
15. *mutia* ‘pearl’ (cf. Old Javanese *mutya*, Tagalog *mutyâ* ‘amulet, charm; pearl’, Cebuano *mutyà* ‘precious gem with magical properties’, Bikol *mutyâ* ‘pearl, jewel, gem’) offers an interesting instance of lexical borrowing between Dravidian, Indo-Aryan and WMP languages. While Kern (1880, p. 557) contends that the borrowing took place through a MIA source (cf. Ardhamāgadhī *muttiya* ‘a pearl’), the word is normally derived from Sanskrit

mutya ‘a pearl’ (Gonda 1973, p. 493; De Casparis 1997, pp. 25, 26). The latter, however, presumably goes back to MIA **mottia* ~ **muttia* ‘a pearl’, of ultimate Dravidian origins (cf. Turner 1966 #10152; Burrow and Emenau 1984 #4959). Several related forms have also spread eastwards. Sanskrit *mauktika* ‘a pearl’, apparently a back-formation of the aforementioned MIA reflex, has been adopted into Old Javanese as *muktikā* ~ *moktika* ‘pearl’, Malay *mutika*, Tagalog †*mutika*, Toba Batak *mutiha*, whereas Tamil *muttu* ‘pearl’ has been borrowed directly into Malay as *mutu*.

16. *pagi* ‘morning’ (cf. Cham *pagi* ‘tomorrow’) has been reconstructed by Adelaar (1992, p. 112) to the level of proto-Malayic; it does not seem to have a higher Austronesian pedigree. Instead, I propose to derive it from a MIA reflex of Sanskrit *prage* ‘early in the morning, at dawn, at day-break’ (cf. Ardhamāgadhī *page* ‘early in the morning’). The syllable-final /e/ was historically absent in proto-Malayic and early Malay, hence the innovation *e > i/_#.
17. *pālana* ‘saddle’ (cf. Old Javanese *palana*) has been regarded as a loan from Sanskrit *palyāṇa* ‘a saddle’ through a MIA source (Gonda 1973, p. 399), which is plausible on phonological grounds. The Sanskrit form is presumably a back-formation of Persian *pālān* ‘a pack-saddle; a vestibule’.²¹ As regards the direct precursor of the WMP attestations, we may consider Mahārāṣṭrī *pallāṇa* ‘saddle’ or a related MIA form; Tamil *pallaṇam* ‘saddle’ and Oriya *palāṇa* ‘pack-saddle’ appear to go back to the same source.
18. *pətarana* ‘a seat near the throne, the seat of the bride and bridegroom’ (cf. Old Javanese *paṭārana* ‘(ceremonial) cushion or mat to sit on’, Balinese (Kawi) *patrana* ‘a throne, high seat’, Acehnese *pataraʔna* ~ *pəttaraʔna* ‘ceremonial seat, seat

²¹ More examples of hyper-Sanskritized words of Persian origins are given in Baghbidi (2006) and Hoogervorst (2013, pp. 9, 103–4).

of honour’) goes back to Sanskrit *prastaraṇa* ‘a couch, seat’ through a MIA language (Gonda 1973, p. 375; Ensink 1978, pp. 179–80, fn. 8); Ardhamāgadhī exhibits *pattharaṇa* ‘bedding’. The retroflex consonant in Old Javanese can be explained through the observation that /st/ occasionally becomes /tṭh/ in MIA varieties such as Śaurasenī, Māgadhī and Ardhamāgadhī (Pischel 1900, pp. 211–22).

19. *ramah* ‘effusive friendliness’ (cf. Cham *rumō* ‘friendly, charming, pleasant, etc.’, Makasar *rama* ~ *rama-rama* ‘make a joint effort, do something with many people’) may be connected with Sanskrit *ramya* ‘enjoyable, pleasing, delightful’ through a MIA language, such as Ardhamāgadhī *ramma* ‘attractive, beautiful’. The sporadic addition of a word-final /h/ observed in the Malay attestation does not stand in isolation.²² The original Sanskrit etymon has also spread eastwards, e.g. in Old Javanese as *ramya* ~ *rame* ‘beautiful; joyful; cheerful; etc.’ and Malay *ramai* ‘cheery, lively; well-attended, populous’ (Gonda 1973, pp. 533–34). The association with large numbers of people in the Malay and Makasar attestations appears to be a secondary development that took place in Southeast Asia.
20. *səngkala* ‘foot fetters’ (cf. Bugis *sakkala*, Makasar *sangkala* ‘block or fetter for the insane’) goes back to Sanskrit *śṛṅkhala* ‘chain’ (Jones 2007, p. 282) through a MIA language (Gonda 1973, pp. 94–95), such as Ardhamāgadhī *saṅkala* ‘a chain’. Tamil *caṅkili* ‘chain, link’ and Malayalam *caṅṅala* ‘chain’ appear to be derived from the same source. Ilokano *tanikalá* ‘gold chain’, Tagalog †*talikalá* ‘chain’ and Cebuano *talikála*

²² Cf. Malay *gajah* ‘elephant’ (< Sanskrit *gaja*), *galuh* ‘princess’ (< *galū* ‘a sort of gem’), *latah* ‘paroxysmal neurosis’ (< *laṭa* ‘one who speaks like a child or like fool’), *patih* ‘minister’ (< *pati* ‘a master, ruler, sovereign’) and *rupiah* ‘rupee’ (< *rūpya*). Words ending in a vowel are also frequently given a word-final /h/ in Old Javanese epigraphy, Jawi manuscripts and Sino-Malay literature, a phenomenon which I hope to address elsewhere.

~ *talikalà* ~ *talikálà* ‘chain, fetter’ are presumably also related through folk-etymological association with *tali* ‘rope’.

21. *sukma* ‘soul’ (cf. Javanese *sukmo* ‘soul, life; spiritual, immaterial’), specifically in the Hindu sense of a substance that passes from body to body in the process of reincarnation (*ātman*), goes back to Sanskrit *sūkṣma* ‘small; atomic; the subtle all-pervading spirit; etc.’ (Gonda 1973, p. 253; De Casparis 1997, p. 35; Jones 2007, p. 302). Kern (1869, p. 10) was the first to suggest that the borrowing took place through a MIA source. The fact that the cluster /kṣ/ corresponds to /kh/ in MIA (Pischel 1900, p. 220) would support this; compare, for example, Pali *sukhuma* ‘subtle, minute’ and Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit *sukhama* ~ *sukhuma* ‘fine, subtle’. In support of a MIA intermediacy, it should be pointed out that the Sanskrit cluster /kṣm/ is normally retained in WMP languages; Old Javanese *sūkṣma* ‘the supernatural manifestation from another world; the invisible essence of what is sensually perceptible, etc.’, Javanese *suksmo* ‘soul, life (of human being)’ and Balinese (Kawi) *suksma* ‘spirit, soul, mind’ appear to be directly borrowed from Sanskrit.²³
22. *tahana* ‘state, dignity’ has its ultimate origins in Sanskrit *sthāna* ‘the act of standing’, whose numerous secondary meanings include ‘rank, dignity’ and ‘locality; province’. The borrowing of this word into Malay must have taken place through MIA **thāṇa* (Gonda 1973, pp. 380, 410), where /th/ corresponds to Sanskrit /sth/ (Pischel 1900, p. 211); it has also been borrowed into Malayalam as *tānam* ‘rank, position’. Old Javanese *thāni* ‘villager; village, country (opp. to town); (cultivated) field’ (cf. Malay *tani* ‘farmer; peasant’) goes back to the same MIA source and constitutes an “i-form” of MIA **thāṇa* (De Casparis 1988,

²³ Also compare Malay *laksamana* ‘honorific title; king of the sea’ (< Sanskrit *Lakṣmaṇa* ‘a character in the *Rāmāyaṇa*’) and Javanese (lit.) *laksmi* ‘beautiful (woman)’ (< Old Javanese *Lakṣmī* ‘goddess of beauty, goddess of the kraton’, Sanskrit *lakṣmī* ‘beauty, loveliness, grace’).

p. 14).²⁴ The etymon is reflected as *thāna* in Ardhamāgadhī and Pali, hence Old Khmer *thāna* ‘place; stance; situation; etc.’. Malay *tanah* ‘land’, on the other hand, is unrelated and goes back to proto-Malayo-Polynesian **taneq* ‘earth, soil, land’, with reflexes as far as Remote Oceania.

23. *talaga* ‘a well, tank, or basin of water, a small mere’ (cf. Old Javanese *talaga* ‘tank, pool, pond’, Javanese *tlaga* ‘lake’, Karo Batak *talagah* ‘deep well, pond’, Makasar *talaka* ‘lake, pond’, Tagalog *talagà* ‘well, spring’) has been connected to Sanskrit *taḍāga* ‘pond, lake’ (De Casparis 1988, p. 63; Jones 2007, p. 318), a somewhat enigmatic form displaying the doublets *taḍāka* and *taṭāka*. On account of the phonological innovation **ḍ > l/V_V* (Pischel 1900, pp. 168–69), I propose that the borrowing took place through a MIA language, such as Ardhamāgadhī *talāga* ‘a pond’. The word is attested in Old Malay as *talāga* ‘lake, pond’ and was presumably borrowed into Malagasy (dial.) as *tahalaka* ‘a border, as in a rice-field’ through metathesis.²⁵
24. *tanggala* ‘a plough’ is an introduced item into Maritime Southeast Asia. In view of Old Javanese *naṅgala* ‘a plough’, Madurese *nangghete*, Makasar *nangkala*, Toba Batak *ninggala* ~ *tinggala* and Karo Batak *nanggala* ‘to plough’ (but *tanggala* ‘a plough’), it seems that an earlier form **nanggala* ‘a plough’ was reinterpreted as a verb in accordance with WMP sound laws pertaining to verbal prenasalization, yielding the hypercorrective would-be stem *tanggala*.²⁶ As regards the direct origins of this form, we

²⁴ We may also call attention to Hindi *thānī* ‘a permanent cultivator’, which ultimately goes back to the same source.

²⁵ Dahl (1951, p. 103) lists the equivalents in Malagasy dialects other than Merina: Betsimisaraka *talaha*, Sakalava *talahake* and Betsileo *tahalake* (his sources are unclear). I have no explanation for the word-final *-ka* or *-ke* in these attestations.

²⁶ Javanese exhibits similar examples outside the domain of verbal prenasalization, e.g. *pandapa* ‘a large square pavilion or hall’ from Sanskrit *maṇḍapa* ‘an open hall or temporary shed, pavilion’ and (lit.) *pradṅga* ‘musical instruments; gamelan ensemble’ from *mṛdaṅga* ‘a kind of drum, tambour’. See also Old Javanese *pataṅgi* ‘elephant’ from Sanskrit *mataṅga* (through word-final /i/-substitution) and *pañca*

may call attention to Ardhamāgadhī *naṅgala* ‘a plough’ (cf. Sanskrit *lāṅgala*). Similar-looking forms are attested in Dravidian languages, such as Tamil *nāñcil*, Malayalam *ñēṇṇōl* and Telugu *nāgali*. Ultimately, an Austro-Asiatic precursor has been proposed (Przyluski 1929, pp. 8–15; Southworth 1988, p. 661; Jenner 2009, p. 707). Shorto (2006, p. 448) reconstructs proto-Mon-Khmer **lŋgal* ~ **ŋgal* (and, by dissimilation, **lŋgʷa/r* and **lŋguur*), whose reflexes presumably ended up in Cham as *langar* ~ *langal* ‘plough’, Acehnese *langay* and Gayo *nānggāl* ~ *nānggāwāl*.

25. *upāti* ‘tribute’ (cf. Javanese *upāti* ‘tribute, tax on production (paid to king)’), which in Malay literature often denotes a payment to a powerful state, is normally connected to Sanskrit *utpatti* ‘arising, production; profit, productiveness’ (Gonda 1973, p. 364; De Casparis 1997, p. 37; Jones 2007, p. 333). The direct precursor of the WMP attestations must have been MIA source, such as Ardhamāgadhī *uppatti* ‘creation, production, manifestation’. The form displays a somewhat unsettled character in Old Javanese, which exhibits *utpatti* ~ *utpatti* ~ *utpati* ~ *utpatti* ~ *upāti* ‘coming into existence; revenue, production; tribute’.²⁷
26. *usaha* ‘assiduity, industry, persistence’ (cf. Tagalog *†osaha* ‘to do something slowly’) ultimately goes back to Sanskrit *utsāha* ‘power; effort, perseverance; firmness’ (Gonda 1973, p. 485; De Casparis 1997, p. 37; Jones 2007, p. 333). The segment /ts/ prior to an open (“low”) vowel corresponds to MIA /ss/ (Pischel 1900, p. 224). Hence, we find Pali *ussāha* ‘strength, power, energy; endeavour, goodwill’, yielding Khmer *ussahà* (ឧស្សាហៈ)

bale ‘pavilion, hall’ and *pañca rañkañ* ‘small building, pavilion (of a special type?)’, whose first element has been connected to Sanskrit *mañca* ‘a stage or platform on a palace or on columns, raised seat, dais, throne’ (Zoetmulder 1982, pp. 1263–64).

²⁷ Despite the coexistence of these Old Javanese forms, the assimilation of the cluster /tp/ cannot be explained away through internal phonological developments, as is it preserved in such attestations as Javanese *nutpah* ‘germ of life, sperm’ from Arabic *nutfaʿ* ‘drop; sperm’ and (lit.) *utpala* ‘blue lotus’ from Sanskrit *utpala* ‘the blossom of the blue lotus (*Nymphaea nouchali* var. *caerulea* (Savigny) Verdc.)’.

‘seriousness, endeavour, perseverance; to study, work hard, try hard’. The Malay attestation is presumably also derived from a MIA source.

All tentative MIA precursors postulated above are attested in Ardhamāgadhī or other literary “Prakrits”. Elsewhere, we must resort to hypothetical reconstructions based on our knowledge of the phonological histories of the languages under research. The following etymologies rely on MIA etyma unattested in the literature but regular in terms of diachronic MIA (and WMP) sound correspondences.

27. *anggota* ‘member, limb’ (cf. Javanese *anggotṭ*, Sundanese *anggahota*) has been connected to Sanskrit *aṅga* ‘a limb, member’, leaving the second part of the apparent compound unexplained (Gonda 1973, p. 489). De Casparis (1997, p. 39, n.1) proposes a derivation from the unattested Sanskrit compound **aṅgabhūta* ‘someone having become a member by joining’ through a MIA source, hence the elision of the intervocalic /bh/. Normally, we would expect the intervocalic /t/ to become /d/ or /y/ in accordance with the MIA sound laws (Pischel 1900, p. 146). However, sequences of long vowels preceding short consonants occasionally turn into short vowels preceding long (i.e. geminated) consonants in MIA (Bhayani 1997, pp. 63–64). This would enable us to reconstruct MIA **aṅgahutta*, in which the element *–hutta* consistently reflects Sanskrit *bhūta* (the past participle of *√bhu* ‘becoming, being, existing’). This etymology is supported by the Sundanese reflex and by Malay †*anggauta*, attested in earlier literature in the same meaning as *anggota*.
28. *bidan* ‘midwife, sage-femme’ has been connected to Sanskrit *vidvan-* (Wilkinson 1932/1, p. 136; Jones 2007, p. 38), which is only attested in compounds and reflects the stem *vidvas* ‘one who knows, learned, skilled in, etc.’ (and ultimately the root *vid* ‘to know, understand, perceive’). Old Javanese has *widwan* ~ *widon* ‘knowing, learned, intelligent, wise’ and *mahāwidwan* ~ *mahawidon* ‘very learned’. In both cases, a derivation from Sanskrit *vidvān*, the nominative singular of *vidvas*, seems more plausible (cf. Tamil *vittuvāṇ* ‘learned man; wise man’). In MIA,

semivowels constituting the last part of a consonant cluster are normally assimilated (Pischel 1900, p. 204; Schmidt 1924, p. 11). This would suggest a MIA form (**vidān* ~ **viddān*) as the direct source of the Malay attestation, a suspicion reinforced by the presence of a set of lexical doublets borrowed directly from Sanskrit: Malay *biduan* ‘singer, musician, dancer’, Acehnese *biduən* ‘prostitute’, Cham *biduon* ‘actor, juggler, clown’ and Bugis *biduwang* ‘singer, dancer’ (as well as Old Javanese *widwan* ~ *widon*).²⁸

29. *cəmāṭi* ‘whip’ (cf. Old Javanese *cāmāṭi* ~ *cəmāṭi*, Javanese *cəmāṭi* ‘whip, riding crop’, Minangkabau *cumati*) is normally derived from Tamil *cammaṭṭi* ‘horsewhip’ (cf. Malayalam *cammaṭṭi* ‘scourge, whip’). The latter form goes back to Sanskrit *carmayaṣṭi* ‘whip’, presumably through a MIA source in which /rm/ became /mm/, the intervocalic /y/ elided, and /ṣṭ/ became /ṭṭh/ (Pischel 1900, pp. 137, 198, 207–8). This would suggest MIA **cammaṭṭhi* (cf. Bengali *cāmāṭi* ~ *cāmāṭi* ‘a strip of leather; a strop’). It is impossible to determine whether the above word was introduced into Southeast Asia through Tamil or directly through MIA.
30. *cuaca* ‘clear (of atmosphere), pellucid’, which refers to ‘the weather’ in contemporary Indonesian, has been connected to Sanskrit *svaccha* ‘very transparent or clear, pellucid, crystalline’ (Jones 2007, p. 51; Tadmor 2009, p. 713), consisting of *su* ‘good, beautiful, well, very, etc.’ and *accha* ‘not dark, pellucid, transparent, clear’. As the innovation from /s/ to /ch/ in word-initial position is regular in Ardhmāgadhī and Māgadhī (Pischel 1900, pp. 152–53), I propose an unattested MIA **chuaccha* as the direct precursor of the Malay attestation. Tamil

²⁸ Aichele (1969, p. 134) and Aciri (2011, pp. 66–67) address a third set of ultimately related lexical doublets: Old Javanese *widu* ‘actor (dancer, singer, reciter, leader in a performance?)’, Malay *bidu* ‘singer at a shamanistic séance’, Bugis *widu-widu* ‘joking, playing around’ and Tagalog *birò* ‘joke, jest, trick, kidding’, which ultimately appear to reflect Sanskrit *vidu* ‘intelligent, wise’.

displays the form *cuvaccam* ‘clearness, as of the atmosphere, water’, whose word-final nasal disqualifies it as the etymon of Malay *cuaca*.

31. *cuka* ‘vinegar’ (cf. Tagalog *sukà*, Cebuano *súkà*, Malagasy (dial.) *tsoha* ‘lemon’) ultimately goes back to Sanskrit *cukra* ‘vinegar made by acetous fermentation’, presumably through a MIA source (Kern 1880, p. 562; Van der Tuuk 1897–1912/1, p. 602; cf. Jones 2007, p. 51). The /kr/ cluster would yield MIA /kk/, enabling us to reconstruct MIA **cukka* ‘vinegar, anything sour?’. Such attestations as Hindi *cūkā* ‘wild sorrel’ and Bengali (dial.) *cukā* ‘a sour, acid’ confirm this reconstruction.
32. *curik* ‘jungle knife’ (cf. Old Javanese *curik* ‘kris, dagger’, Toba Batak *surik* ‘k.o. sword’) and *curiga* ~ *cəriga* ‘a broad-bladed short curved sword or dagger’ (cf. Old Javanese *curiga* ‘kris’, Toba Batak *suriga* ‘k.o. sword’, Makasar *curiga* ‘iron tool with rings on both ends, used during certain rituals’)²⁹ constitute two ultimately related sets that can be traced back to Sanskrit *kṣura* ‘razor; a knife, dagger’ and its secondary form *kṣurikā* ‘a knife, dagger; a small razor’. In MIA, /kṣ/ often becomes /ch/ in word-initial position (Pischel 1900, p. 219ff.). In view of late Sanskrit *chūrī* ~ *churī* ‘a knife, dagger’ and Hindi *churī* ‘a knife; a dagger; a scalpel’, we can be fairly sure that *curik* and related WMP attestations go back to an unattested MIA **churī* ‘knife’ (see fn. 19 on the post-fixation of a glottal stop in loanwords into Malay). This may also be the source of Old Khmer *curi* ~ *curī* ‘an unidentified bladed weapon such as a dagger, dirk, poniard or kris’. The Malay form *curiga*, or *cəriga*, has been connected to Sanskrit *churikā* ‘knife, dagger’ (Gonda 1973, pp. 242, 411, n. 98; Jones 2007, p. 52), itself derived from the abovementioned *kṣurikā*. More precisely, it corresponds to an unattested MIA

²⁹ Also see Gayo *cəlikar* ‘k.o. foreign dagger’, whose irregular shape is presumably due to confusion with *culika* ‘cowardly’; a similar confusion may explain the unexpected shape of Malay *curiga* ‘watchful, on one’s guard, vigilant’ (see example 37).

**churigā* (cf. Ardhamāgadhī *churiyā* ‘a small knife’, Mahārāṣṭrī *churiyā* ‘dagger’).³⁰ Dravidian attestations such as Tamil *curikai* ‘dirk, short sword’ and Malayalam *curika* ‘dagger, small sword’ reflect the same etymon (Emenau and Burrow 1962, p. 34). Whether this word spread to Southeast Asia through an early MIA source or through Malayalam—in which the intervocalic <k> is normally pronounced as a voiced velar fricative /ɣ/—remains undetermined.

33. *gubah* ‘cutting and arranging flowers for wearing in aigrette form in the hair’ (cf. Old Javanese *gubah* ‘to string, wreath (flowers)’, Javanese *gubah* ‘to make an artistic creation’) may be connected to the Sanskrit verb *guphati* ‘to string together, tie or string as a garland’, and in particular its present-tense stem *gupha-*, which would correspond to MIA **gubha-* on account of the innovation *ph > bh between vowels (cf. Pischel 1900, p. 144). The word-final /h/ in the Malay attestation is due to metathesis of aspiration (cf. Table 9.1). As pointed out by Martin Walsh (pers. comm. on 2 February 2014), Swahili *kikuba* (pl. *vikuba*), which in Zanzibar denotes ‘a small threaded bouquet of fragrant flowers and/or aromatic herbs worn by women on special occasions’, might be related; the non-inherited /b/ indicates that it is a loanword, but the devoicing of /g/ requires further explanation.
34. *muara* ‘estuary, river mouth’ (cf. Old Malay *muara*, Old Javanese *muhara*, Sundanese *muhara*, Madurese *mowara*) has been reconstructed to proto-Malayic **muhara*(?) ‘river-mouth’ (Adelaar 1992, p. 52).³¹ The form reminds us of Tamil *mukattuvāram*

³⁰ Several analogous MIA borrowings displaying the word-final segment /ga/ are addressed in section 5.

³¹ Another Malay term for ‘estuary, river mouth’ is *kuala*, which is used interchangeably with *muara*. We may also call attention to Old Malay *mināna*, presumably in the same meaning (*contra* Coedès 1930, p. 35, n. 1) based on Toba Batak *binanga* ‘river, deep place in the river’, Malagasy *vinany* ‘the confluence of two or more streams or rivers, the mouth of a river’, Makasar *binanga* ‘river’, Bugis *winanga* ~ *minanga* ‘river’, Ibanag *minanga* ‘river mouth’ and Maranao *minanga* ‘outlet; mouth of river or stream’.

‘mouth of a firth or river’, Telugu *nadī-mukhadvāramu* ‘the mouth of a river’ and Sinhala *muṇḍara* ~ *mōḍara* ~ *mōya* ‘mouth of a river, place where a river disembogues’, which appear to reflect an unattested Sanskrit compound **mukhadvāra* ‘river mouth’ (Hoogervorst 2013, p. 35), consisting of *mukha* ‘face, mouth; front; beginning’ and *dvāra* ‘door, gateway; opening’. In MIA, aspirated consonants are reduced to /h/ between vowels (Pischel 1900, p. 137), whereas the cluster /dv/ would normally assimilate to /dd/ (Pischel 1900, p. 204; Schmidt 1924, p. 11) but appears to become /v/ before /ā/.³² This enables the reconstruction of MIA **muhavāra* ‘river mouth’, which presumably gave rise to the WMP attestations.

5. MIA Loanwords in Other WMP Languages

It is generally believed that the Malay language has played a key role in the dissemination of lexical influence from the wider Indian Ocean World to Southeast Asia—as remains to be the case to date. However, the tentative MIA borrowings addressed in this section are not attested in (modern) Malay. This may be due to our limited understanding of Old Malay, which remains relatively poorly documented. It is indeed possible that the loanwords discussed here existed in earlier, undocumented Malayic varieties, but this remains a speculation. The vast majority are found in Old Javanese, as listed below. As some of these examples have also spread beyond the Javanese speech area, we may assume a more important role for Java in the dissemination of Indic culture across Maritime Southeast Asia than previously given credit for.

35. *bhiṇḍiwāla*, the meaning of which is somewhat uncertain but definitely denotes some sort of weapon (cf. Javanese (lit.) *binḍiwolo* ‘spear’), ultimately goes back to Sanskrit *bhindipāla* ‘short javelin or arrow thrown by hand or shot through a tube’. Van der

³² This impression is supported by the following MIA reconstructions: **gharavāra* ‘house door’ < *grhadvāra*, **pacchāvāya* ‘west wind’ < *paścādvāta* and **savāya* ‘truthful’ < *sadvāda* (Turner 1966, #4433, #8003, #13125).

Tuuk (1881, p. 46; 1897–1912/4, p. 849) was the first to suggest a MIA origin. As the intervocalic /p/ corresponds to /v/ in MIA (Pischer 1900, pp. 143–44), the direct precursor must have been MIA **bhiṇḍivāla*. Ardhamāgadhī normally exhibits *bhiṇḍimāla* ‘a knife, a dagger’, but *bhiṇḍivāla* is also attested (Pischel 1900, p. 173).

36. *catalisa* ‘forty’ has been considered a MIA form (Zoetmulder 1982, p. 312). It ultimately reflects Sanskrit *catvāriṃśa* ‘the 40th’ and may have been borrowed through Pali *cattālīsa* ‘forty’, Ardhamāgadhī *cattālīsa* or a related language.
37. *culi* presumably denotes some sort of dishonourable behaviour. It is attested in the derivative forms *culika* ‘cowardly’—exhibiting the Sanskrit suffix *-ka* discussed in section 6—and *culibrata* or *curibrata* ‘base or cowardly conduct’.³³ In the light of the form *curibrata*, we may also call attention to Old Javanese *curi* ‘deceitful, false, transgressing the rules (of the *dharmayuddha*)’. On the one hand, a precursor may be sought in Tamil *culi-* ‘to be cunning, guileful’. On the other, we may connect it to Ardhamāgadhī *culla* ‘small, tiny’, reflecting Sanskrit *kṣulla* ‘small, little, minute, inferior’ based on the regular sound correspondence between /kṣ/ and /c/ in that language (Pischel 1900, p. 223). In that case, Old Javanese *culi* would constitute an “i-form” of this MIA etymon. Sanskrit also exhibits *kṣullaka* ‘little, small; wicked, malicious’, after which Old Javanese *culika* may have been modelled. The innovation from /a/ to /i/ may have already taken place in South Asia in view of Sinhala *suliya* ‘mischievous, wickedness, imposture, deceit’ (suggesting an earlier **kṣullika*) and Hindi *cullī* ‘lewd’. Old Javanese *culika* is reflected in modern Javanese as *culik* ‘untrustworthy, dishonest’ and Balinese *cəlika* ‘envious, jealous, unfavourable’ ~ (North

³³ Old Javanese *brata* ‘mode or manner of life, conduct, custom’ goes back to Sanskrit *vrata* ‘will; conduct, manner, usage, custom’, also borrowed as Makasar *barata* ‘observe certain abstentions’.

Bali) *clika* ‘suspect, be suspicious’. In some WPM languages, this word appears to have been confused with reflexes of Old Javanese *curiga* ‘kris’ (cf. example 32). Illustratively, Malay *curiga* ‘watchful, on one’s guard, vigilant’ seems to reflect Old Javanese *curiga* in form but *culika* in meaning, whereas Gayo *cəlikax* ‘k.o. foreign dagger’ corresponds to Old Javanese *culika* in form but with *curiga* in meaning.

38. *ghariṇī* ‘wife’ (cf. Javanese (lit.) *garini* ‘wife, queen’) ultimately goes back to Sanskrit *grhiṇī* ‘the mistress of a house, wife’, presumably through a MIA source (Van der Tuuk 1897–1912/4, p. 666). We indeed find Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit *ghariṇī* ‘housewife’ and Ardhamāgadhī *gharaṇī* ‘a housewife; a wife’.
39. *gusali* or *gosali* ‘a smithy’ (cf. Javanese *gusali* ‘blacksmith’, Sundanese *gosali* ‘smithy’, Bugis †*gosali* ‘cemetery, residence of the deceased’, Tagalog *gusali* ‘building’) predominantly carries the meaning of ‘blacksmith’ in Old Javanese epigraphy (De Casparis 1988, p. 58). Kern (1873, p. 217, fn. 2) derives the word from Sanskrit *kauśalya* ‘cleverness, skilfulness, experience’.³⁴ This derivation becomes especially attractive upon considering the corresponding Mahārāṣṭrī reflex: *kosalla* ‘skill’. As demonstrated in section 2, the innovations *k > g/#_, *o > u and *a > i/_# can all be explained in terms of internal developments.
40. *kaḍāha* and *kaḍāhaka* are of uncertain meaning; Zoetmulder (1982, p. 761) tentatively glosses ‘lowest part (root) of a mountain? crater?’ and connects the forms to Sanskrit *kaṭāha* ‘a frying-pan; a cauldron; hell, the infernal regions; (L.) a turtle’s

³⁴ This semantic shift, as Kern points out, resembles that of Javanese *kriyo* ‘skill, craft; craftsman’ from Sanskrit *kriyā* ‘doing, activity; bodily action, etc.’. Comparable examples of semantic specification include Malay *pandai* ‘artist-craftsman, expert, specialist’, ultimately from Sanskrit *paṇḍita* ‘learned, educated, wise, clever in, familiar with’ (example 16) and *bidu* ‘singer at a shamanistic séance’ from *vidu* ‘intelligent, wise’ (28). Alternatively, we may connect the form with Sanskrit *kuśala* ‘right, proper; able, skilful’.

shell’.³⁵ If so, the direct precursor must have been a MIA form, such as Ardhamāgadhī *kaḍāha* ‘an iron vessel, a cauldron; the back of a tortoise’. The form *kaḍāhaka* has been given the Sanskrit suffix *-ka*, perhaps in analogy to Sanskrit *kaṭāhaka* ‘a pan, cauldron, pot’. We may call attention to Cebuano *kaláhà* ‘frying pan with a rounded bottom and a handle’ and Tagalog *kalaha* ‘iron frying pan’, probably through a now extinct Malay or Javanese precursor. This word has also found its way into Old Khmer, which exhibits *kaṭāha* ~ *kadāha* ~ *gadāha* ‘round-bottomed metal pan for frying: wok’, whence it was adopted into Khmer as *khthah* (𑄓𑄢𑄟) ‘large pan, frying pan, wok’ and Thai *katha* (กะทะ) ‘frying pan, skillet’.

41. *kawittha*, of uncertain meaning, features in Javanese epigraphy as one of the *pañcopacāra* “five requisites for respectful attention or worship”, alongside flowers (*kamwañ*), lamps (*dīpa*), incense (*dhūpa*) and scented ointments (*gandhalepa*) (Bosch 1925, p. 43,

³⁵ As regards the exact meaning(s) of the Old Javanese reflex, we may briefly examine the textual sources in which it is attested. Zoetmulder’s dictionary only identifies *kaḍāha* in the *Smaradahana* (8.10) and the *Bhomāntaka* (2.4, 2.5). The relevant line in the former text reads “*salwirning bhuwana kadāha mogha liṇḍū*” (Poerbatjaraka 1931, p. 15) and *kadāha* here is presumably the passive prefix *k(a)-* in combination with *dāha*, reflecting Sanskrit *dāha* ‘burning, combustion; internal heat’ (see example 62). I would thus translate the segment as “Every corner of the earth was set ablaze and shook” and regard Zoetmulder’s identification with *kaḍāha* as erroneous. In the *Bhomakāwya*, we read the story of Viṣṇu’s unsuccessful attempts to obtain a crystal *liṅga*, towering as high as the eye can see. Enraged, he takes the shape of a gigantic boar and tries to uproot the jewel from below, before changing into a hawk and trying to split it with his wings. The relevant lines read “*lapas tēka ri sor kaḍāha sira tan palaca-laca wēkas nikañ manik*” and “*huwus tēka sire kaḍāhaka nika ruhur ika binalah nireñ hēlar*” (Teeuw and Robson 2005, p. 82), which I would translate as “having moved underneath the *kaḍāha*, there was no trace of the jewel” and “after reaching the top of the *kaḍāhaka*, he was to smash it asunder with his wings”. Bearing in mind that the Sanskrit etymon can also translate as “hell, the infernal regions” or “a turtle’s shell”, we may call attention to the mythical turtle that upholds the world in Hindu mythology, known as *Kūrmārāja* or *Akūpāra* in Sanskrit and *Akūpa* in Old Javanese. While the *kaḍāha*, which the *Bhomāntaka* locates beneath the earth, can be identified as the “hell”, I would argue that the celestial *kaḍāhaka* represents the “vault of the heaven”, envisioned here as the upper shell of *Akūpa*.

v. 3a/11; De Casparis 1988, p. 60). Gonda (1973, p. 385) connects the word to Sanskrit *kapittha* ‘the wood-apple tree (*Limonia acidissima* L.)’ through a MIA form. The intervocalic /p/ would have become /v/ (Pischel 1900, pp. 143–44), yielding MIA *kavittha* as a plausible direct precursor of the Old Javanese attestation. The form *kavittha* is used alongside *kaviṭṭha* in Ardhamāgadhī (Pischel 1900, p. 227). Heyne (1927, p. 862) calls attention to the outward similarity between *L. acidissima* and *Aegle marmelos* (L.) Corrêa, another fruit-bearing tree commonly called “wood-apple”. The latter tree, also known as the “holy bael” (cf. example 6), is regarded as sacred in Hinduism and may have caused the incorporation of the otherwise rather unusable *Limonia acidissima* into the Javanese *pañcopacāra*. The latter, according to the same source, has also been borrowed into Sundanese as *kawista*, Madurese *kabista* ~ *karabista* and Javanese *kawis* ~ *kawistō*. The /st/ cluster, presumably replacing an earlier /tth/, may be due to hypercorrection by lexicographers, as the former developed into the latter in MIA (Pischel 1900, p. 211). This word has also been adopted into Old and modern Khmer as *khvit* (ខ្ទីត), presumably through Pali *kaviṭṭha*.

42. *kujyarata* ~ *kujyarakta* refers to ‘a certain kind of fabric’, which Zoetmulder (1982, p. 911) tentatively connects to Gujarat, a centre of textile production from antiquity. In Thai, we find the presumably related form *kujarāt* (กุฎราต) ‘kind of ancient patterned cloth’. If this etymology is correct, the direct precursor must have been MIA *gujjarattā*, reflecting Sanskrit *gurjaratrā* ‘country of the *Gurjaras*’. This MIA form is attested on the Mātā kī Sāl or Ghaṇṭiyālā inscription (Bhandarkar 1903, pp. 414–16). I would argue that the presence of the consonant clusters /jy/ and /kt/ in Old Javanese, replacing respectively /jj/ and /tt/, once again reflects the deliberate creation of a hyper-Sanskrit form in accordance with known sound changes (cf. Pischel 1900, pp. 187, 193).
43. *lāka* ‘lac (i.e. a resinous secretion)’ (cf. Tagalog *lakhâ* ‘base element for tint and dye preparation’, Cebuano *lakhá* ‘gum

shellac’, Maranao *laka?* ‘gum from plants’, Ibanag *laka* ‘a somewhat rubbery timber’), which also appears to denote ‘a red fabric (dyed with lac?); red’ (Zoetmulder 1982, p. 957), has been derived from Sanskrit *lākṣā* ‘a kind of red dye, lac’ through a MIA language (Kern 1880, p. 552). Ardhamāgadhī has *lakkhā* in the same meaning, reflecting the regular development of the intervocalic cluster /kṣ/ into /kkh/ (Pischel 1900, p. 220). De Casparis (1988, p. 61) calls attention to Old Javanese *manlākha* ‘lac-dyers’, a profession regularly mentioned in lists of cottage industries, which undoubtedly goes back to the same source.³⁶

44. *mañjāṭi* ~ *māñjāṭi* ‘a part. k.o. fabric (prob. an imported cloth)’ has been connected by Zoetmulder (1982, p. 1115) to Sanskrit *mañjiṣṭha* ‘bright red’, purportedly borrowed through Hindi. Semantically, this would then be an imported, red-dyed cloth. We may also call attention to Ardhamāgadhī *mañjiṭṭhā* ‘a red dye’, of which the Old Javanese attestation could be an “i-form”. If so, the ultimate precursor is Sanskrit *mañjiṣṭhā* ‘Indian madder (*Rubia manjith* Roxb. ex Fleming)’, a plant from whose roots a popular dye was made.
45. *murawa* ‘tambourine’ is related to Sanskrit *muraḥa* in the same meaning, presumably through a MIA source (Gonda 1973, pp. 398–99). The intervocalic /j/ would have normally developed into /y/ (Pischel 1900, p. 177), but Ardhamāgadhī indeed displays *murava* ‘a big drum’.

³⁶ The author further suggests that the borrowing must have taken place through a NIA source (**lakkhā*) on account of the absence of a geminated consonant in Old Javanese. However, this study contains numerous analogous examples where consonant gemination of the Indic precursor is not reflected in Old Javanese, e.g. *asuji* (example 50), *bapa* (2), *bhaṭāra* (4), *camāṭi* (29), *culi* (37), *gusali* (39), *jaga* (12), *kanigara* (80), *mañjāṭi* (44), *palana* (17), *palayka* (47), *peka* (49), *uṇḍahagi* (81) and *waja* (1). The alleged transmission through a NIA source was rejected independently by Griffiths (2012, p. 211, fn. 20).

46. *paḍaha* ‘drum’, which also displays the “i-form” *paḍahi* (De Casparis 1988, p. 62), goes back to Sanskrit *paṭaha* ‘a kettledrum, a war-drum’ through a MIA language. Ardhamāgadhī *paḍaha* ‘a big drum’ is a plausible precursor.
47. *palāṅka* ‘couch, seat, bench, throne’ (cf. Balinese *plangka-n* ‘a wooden couch, bedstead’, Bugis *palakka* ‘k.o. couch’, Ilokano *palángka* ‘chair, swivel chair’) appears to go back to a MIA reflex of Sanskrit *paryāṅka* ‘bed, litter’ (Van der Tuuk 1897–1912/4, p. 259). Ensink (1978, pp. 179–80, fn. 8) derives the word from Pali *pallanka* ‘a divan, sofa, couch’, but other MIA sources are equally plausible; Ardhamāgadhī exhibits *pallaṅka* ‘a cot, a bedstead’. Javanese *plangki* ‘palanquin’ might be an “i-form” of Old Javanese *palāṅka*, if not (re)borrowed from a NIA source such as Oriya *pālāṅki* ‘an old fashioned palanquin; sedan chair, palki’.³⁷ The MIA form was also adopted into Old Khmer as *pallaṅka* ‘divan, couch; palanquin’. Old Javanese additionally exhibits *paryāṅka* ‘bed, couch, sofa, litter, palanquin, seat, bench, throne’, a direct loan from Sanskrit.
48. *paṇḍya* ‘learned man, holy man, sage’ has been derived from Sanskrit *paṇḍita* ‘learned, educated, wise, clever in, familiar with’ through MIA *paṇḍia* (Gonda 1973, p. 171). In Ardhamāgadhī, we find the form *paṇḍiya* ‘a scholar; a learned or intellectual person’. The Sanskrit etymon has also been borrowed directly, e.g. Old Javanese *paṇḍita* ‘scholar, learned man; wise, learned; etc.’, Balinese (lit.) *paṇḍita* ‘learned man, a learned priest, a pundit’, Malay *pāndeta* ~ *pāndita* ‘learned man; clergyman’ and Makasar *panrita* ‘learned, expert’. A third set of lexical doublets has been borrowed from a NIA reflex of this protoform: Old Javanese *paṇḍe* ~ *paṇḍay* ‘skilled worker; smith, goldsmith,

³⁷ Its derivative, Javanese *plangken* (*plangki* + suffix *-an* through vowel contraction) in essentially the same meaning, presumably yielded Portuguese *palanquim*, Malay *pālangkeng* and English “palanquin”.

etc.’, Malay *pandai* ‘artist-craftsman, expert, specialist’,³⁸ Toba Batak *pande* ‘skilful, craftsman’, Tagalog *panday* ‘blacksmith’ and Bikol *pandáy* ‘craftsman, smith; blacksmith, carpenter’. It has been tentatively connected to NIA forms such as Hindi *paṇḍe* ‘a title of Brahmins; a schoolmaster’, Bengali *pāmre* ‘the family name of some upcountry Brahmins’ (Gonda 1973, pp. 170–71; De Casparis 1988, p. 61; Hoogervorst 2013, p. 26), ultimately reflecting the aforementioned Sanskrit *paṇḍita*.

49. *peka* ‘foot-soldier’ has been considered a Persian loan (Gonda 1973, p. 80). We may, however, put into question whether the borrowing was direct. I would argue that the Persian word *paik* ‘a running footman; a carrier, messenger’ was adopted in South Asia at a relatively early stage, featuring in Sanskrit as *pāyika* ‘a foot-soldier, footman’ and Ardhamāgadhī *pāikka* ‘infantry’. On account of the paragogic /a/ in Old Javanese, the borrowing presumably took place through a MIA source and not directly from Persian (cf. example 17).

As has been done in the previous section, let us now examine plausible MIA loanwords in Old Javanese which have not been attested in the Indian textual or epigraphical corpus and remain hypothetical reconstructions.

50. *asuji* ‘a month of the lunar calendar’ must ultimately go back to Sanskrit *aśvayuja* ‘the month Āśvina’, but the phonological changes remain unexplained. In a Sanskrit inscription on a thirteenth-century East Javanese Mahākṣobhya statue, it occurs as *āsuji* (Kern 1910). On Madagascar, where several Indic names of months have been introduced (Dahl 1951, pp. 98–101; Gonda 1973, p. 131), we find *asotry* ~ *asotra* (dial.) ‘winter and autumn’. The same word features as Toba Batak *si Sudiya* and Karo Batak *si Sudi* (Parkin 1978, p. 121). As regards its direct

³⁸ In contemporary Malay also often in the meaning of ‘clever, able, knowledgeable’, but originally referring to any kind of industrial craftsman. In the sequence *pandai besi* (*besi* = ‘iron’), for instance, it denotes a ‘smith’.

precursor, De Casparis (1988, pp. 52–53) calls attention to Pali *assayuja* ‘Āśvinī’ and Hindi *asauij* ~ *asoj* ‘the sixth solar month’, suggesting that the borrowing took place in an intermediate stage of language development. Ardhamāgadhī displays *assoī* ‘the full moon and the new-moon days of the month Āśvina’, suggesting that the word-final /i/ instead of /a/ may already have emerged on the Indian Subcontinent. The intervocalic /j/ in the Old Javanese attestation is somewhat enigmatic. I would argue that it represents the above Sanskrit etymon in combination with the oft-occurring suffix *-ya* (cf. Whitney 1950, pp. 459–64), hence **āśvayujya* ‘belonging to Āśvayuja; of Āśvayuja’. This form is in fact attested in Old Khmer, which exhibits fluctuation between *’āśvayuja* ~ *’asvayuja* ~ *’āśvayujja* ~ *’āśvayujj* ~ *’āsuyujja* ~ *’āśvajja* ~ *’āsujja* ‘the eleventh lunar month, also called Āśvina’. As Sanskrit /jy/ corresponds to MIA /jj/ (Pischel 1900, p. 193), I propose that an unattested MIA **asauijja* or **asojja* (if not **asauijī* ~ **asojī*) gave rise to the WMP attestations, as well as the above Hindi *tadbhavas*.

51. *gurundaya* ‘swiftlet, cliff-swallow, salangane’ (cf. Javanese (lit.) *grundoyō* ‘variety of swallow’) has been connected to Sanskrit *guruṇṭaka* (Gonda 1973, p. 382), which appears to denote ‘a kind of peacock’ (cf. *gurukāṇṭha* in the same meaning). Beyond the observation that both are ornithological species, the semantic shift eludes me. However, the weakening of /k/ to /y/ in intervocalic position and the voicing of retroflex consonants and consonant clusters in MIA (Pischel 1900, pp. 137, 143) indeed enables the MIA reconstruction **gurundaya*, denoting an unspecified kind of bird, as the more direct precursor of the Javanese attestation.
52. *lāwuwīṇā* ‘lute in the shape of a bottle-gourd’ ultimately reflects Sanskrit *alābuvīṇā* ‘a lute of the shape of a bottle-gourd’. The Old Javanese attestation might go back to a MIA source exhibiting apheresis of the word-initial vowel (**?lāwuvīṇā*). The would-be segment *lāwu* ‘bottle-gourd’ is unattested in Old Javanese, whose default word is *walū* ~ *waluh*. The latter appear to be derived

from the former through metathesis, cf. Malay *labu* ‘bottle-gourd (*Lagenaria siceraria* (Molina) Standl.)’, Madurese *labu*, Bugis *lawo* and Makasar *lau* (Mahdi 1998, p. 393), ultimately reflecting Sanskrit *alābu* in the same meaning.³⁹

In addition to these Old Javanese attestations, we may expect to find several analogous MIA borrowings in other WMP languages. In this chapter, I have prioritized Malay and Old Javanese. Nevertheless, I have chanced upon the following borrowings; more may be encountered upon further investigation.

53. *baitō* (Javanese, *krama*) ‘boat’ is ultimately related to Sanskrit *vahitra* ‘boat’ (Gonda 1973, p. 387). I would argue that the borrowing took place through an unattested MIA **vahitta*, exhibiting a regular sound correspondence between /tr/ and /tt/ (Pischel 1900, pp. 198–99). In support of this reconstruction, we may call attention to NIA reflexes such as Oriya *bohita* ‘boat’, Bengali *bāhita* ‘propelled, paddled, transported, etc.’, Nepali *bahito* ‘voyage’, etc. Conversely, Old Javanese *bahitra* ‘boat, vessel’ and Malay *bahtara* ‘ark, argosy, stately ship’ must be direct borrowings from Sanskrit *vahitra*.
54. *duta* (Balinese, high) ‘evil, bad, debauched’ has been connected to Sanskrit *duṣṭa* ‘defiled, bad’ (Gonda 1973, p. 387). This is especially plausible if the borrowing took place via a MIA language, such as Ardhamāgadhī *duṭṭha* ‘evil, wicked’.
55. *mantagi* (Angkola-Mandailing Batak) ‘forehead (used poetically to indicate the fate written on someone’s forehead)’, also documented as Toba Batak †*mantagi* and Minangkabau †*muntagi* in the same meaning (Van der Tuuk 1861, p. 418), may be a nasalized “i-form” ultimately reflecting Sanskrit *mastaka* ‘head’ through a MIA language, such as Ardhamāgadhī *matthaga*

³⁹ While Mon-Khmer languages display similar-looking attestations (cf. Shorto 2006, p. 472), the idea of an Austro-Asiatic origin of this word—as first proposed by Przyluski (1929, pp. 155–60)—is problematic. See Mahdi (1998, p. 393) for a refutation of this theory.

‘the head’ (cf. Tamil *mattakam* ‘head, forehead’). Analogous examples in which Sanskrit /k/ corresponds to MIA /g/ in an intervocalic position are given in section 6, whereas the prenasalization of intervocalic stops in WMP languages is addressed in Table 9.1.

56. *salaga* (Angkola-Mandailing Batak) ‘crossbeam, connecting the neck of a buffalo to the yoke’, Toba Batak *salaga* ‘beam on the yoke of a plough, to which the shaft is connected’, Madurese *salaghæ* ‘harrow of a plough’, Bugis *salaga* and Makasar *salaga* ‘harrow’ seemingly go back to a MIA reflex of Sanskrit *śālākā* ‘any small stake or stick, rod, rib, bar; a peg, pin, etc.’, such as Ardhamāgadhī *salāgā* ‘a rod’.

6. MIA Loanwords with Word-Final /ga/

In several MIA varieties, the voiceless velar stop /k/ of OIA underwent voicing in the intervocalic position (Pischel 1900, pp. 145–46). In a later stage of language development, this consonant became /y/ and eventually disappeared. In this regard, Pali is the most conservative MIA language in evidence, as it has not undergone this sound change. Illustratively, we may compare Sanskrit *udaka* ‘water’, Pali *udaka*, MIA *udaga* > *udaya* > *uaa* and Sanskrit *svaka* ‘one’s own’ > Pali *saka* > MIA *saga* > *saya* > *saa* (Turner 1966 #1921, #13894). A closer examination of the words displaying this specific phonological innovation is useful; as the Sanskrit suffix *-ka* is often added to nouns and adjectives to create near-synonyms (cf. Whitney 1950, pp. 466–69), the presence of a word-final segment /ga/ in WMP languages should arouse suspicion of possible MIA influence or intermediacy. In the previous sections, a MIA origin has been postulated for the words *guliga* (example 11), *curiga* (32), *mantagi* (55) and *salaga* (56). This section features 25 additional examples.

Scholars like Gonda (1973), De Casparis (1988) and Tadmor (2009) have identified some WMP attestations displaying word-final /ga/—reflecting Sanskrit /ka/—as Sanskrit loans through Tamil-speakers, as the phonological innovation *k > g/V_V is also attested in South Dravidian pronunciations of Sanskrit loanwords. The problem with

this interpretation lies with the fact that Tamil typically adds female, male or neutral gender suffixes, respectively *-ai*, *-an* and *-am*, to Indo-Aryan borrowings ending in /a/ (Van Ronkel 1902*b*, p. 102). Technically, Malayalam or a regional variety of Tamil may have been the intermediary language of some of these borrowings, but the examples listed in this section will serve to demonstrate the importance of focusing directly on possible MIA sources. In this light, an evaluation is due of some of the Old Javanese etymologies proposed by earlier scholars.

57. *banyaga* ~ *banyāga* 'merchant, captain of a merchant-vessel' (cf. Malay *baniaga* 'trade, commerce',⁴⁰ Sundanese *buniyaga* 'temporary settler', Toba Batak *boniaga* 'trade goods', Makasar †*baniaga* 'foreign trader', Tagalog *banyagà* 'stranger, foreigner, alien, foreign', Ilokano *baniāga* 'commerce, trade, travel, trip') has been connected to Sanskrit *vāṇijaka* 'a merchant' through a MIA source (Van der Tuuk 1897–1912/4, p. 863; Gonda 1973, p. 443; Zoetmulder 1982, p. 205; De Casparis 1988, p. 55). The word is found in Old Malay as *vaṇiyāga* 'trader'. As regards its specific origins, Kern (1880, p. 542) was the first to specifically call attention to Ardhamāgadhī *vāṇiyaga* 'trade; merchant, trader' as the direct source for the WMP attestations.

58. *campaga* 'yellow jade orchid tree (*Magnolia champaca* (L.) Baill. ex Pierre)⁴¹ (cf. Makasar *campaga* '*M. champaca*', Ilokano *sampāga* 'Arabian jasmine (*Jasminum sambac* (L.) Sol.); to bloom', Ibanag *sampaga* 'jasmine', Bikol *sampāga* 'k.o. flower', Kapampangan *sampaga* 'flower') has been regarded as a MIA or Dravidian reflex of Sanskrit *campaka* '*Magnolia champaca*' (De Casparis 1988, p. 56). Mahārāṣṭrī exhibits *campaga* and Ardhamāgadhī has *campaga* alongside *campaka*, the latter

⁴⁰ This form often occurs as *barniaga*, evidently a reinterpretation of *baniaga* as an intransitive verb with the prefix *bār-*. Through back-formation, Malay subsequently obtained the would-be stem *niaga* 'trade'.

⁴¹ Used alongside *campagi* and, more commonly, *campaka* (cf. Malay *campaka* 'frangipani (*Plumeria rubra* L.); *Magnolia champaca*').

presumably a *tatsama* from Sanskrit. The word-final nasal in Tamil *campakam*, Malayalam *ceṁpakam*, Telugu *campakamu*, etc. disqualify these forms from having yielded Old Javanese *campaga*.

59. *sagala* ‘altogether, completely, all of them?’ (cf. Malay *səgala* ‘all, every; the whole’, Sundanese *gala* ~ *sagala* ‘all, every; the whole’) ultimately goes back to Sanskrit *sakala* ‘consisting of parts; complete, entire, whole, all’ (Jones 2007, p. 278). The intervocalic /g/ is normally interpreted as the result of Tamil influence (Gonda 1973, p. 162; De Casparis 1997, p. 32; Tadmor 2009, p. 694). However, the Tamil reflex is *cakalam* ‘all, the whole’, which hardly resembles its alleged Malay derivative. Instead, we may call attention to Ardhamāgadhī *sagala* ‘full, all, whole’ as the direct precursor.
60. *tambaga* ‘copper’ (cf. Malay *təmbaga* ‘brass, copper’, Makasar *tambaga* ‘red copper’, Tagalog *tumbaga* ‘copper-gold alloy’, Cebuano *tumbága* ‘copper, copper alloy’) is generally considered to be derived from a MIA reflex of Sanskrit *tāmra* ‘copper’ (Kern 1869, p. 10; 1880, p. 563; Van der Tuuk 1897–1912/2, p. 788; Gonda 1973, p. 91; De Casparis 1988, pp. 63–64; 1997, p. 36; Blust 1992, p. 443), consisting of *tāmra* ‘of a coppery red colour’ + suffix *-ka*. The shift from /mr/ to /mb/ between vowels is regular in Mahārāṣṭrī and Ardhamāgadhī (Pischel 1900, pp. 202–3). Ardhamāgadhī displays *tamba* ‘copper’ and *tambaga* ‘a four-sensed being’, the latter undoubtedly reflecting a second meaning of Sanskrit *tāmra*: ‘of a *Gandharva* (i.e. a supernatural being)’. Thus, while not directly attested in the meaning of ‘copper’, this established MIA etymology satisfies historical linguistic criteria regarding the expected sound changes.
61. *tiga* ‘three’ (cf. Malay *tiga*, Javanese (*krama*) *tigə*) constitutes a substitution of proto-Austronesian **telu* ‘three’. Although most modern Malay varieties exhibit cognates of *tiga*, Adelaar

(1992, p. 117) proposes the proto-Malayic reconstruction **talū*.⁴² The similarity of Malay *tiga* with certain Dravidian attestations did not go unnoticed by Van Ronkel (1903) and Gonda (1973, p. 315), who dismissed it as chance resemblance. Dyen (1946; 1952) argues, correctly to my mind, that the word goes back to MIA **tiga*, reflecting Sanskrit *trika* ‘triple’. This form is regular in MIA, where consonant clusters ending with /r/ typically lose this sound at the syllable onset (Pischel 1900, p. 185; Schmidt 1924, p. 11). Ardhamāgadhī, for example, has *tiga* ‘a meeting of three paths’. As mentioned above, the form has also been adopted into some Dravidian languages, such as Telugu *tiga* ‘three’ and Kannada *tiga* ‘a triad’. It is unclear whether the borrowing took place through a Dravidian source or directly from MIA.

I propose that the following Malay words, whose etyma are based on reconstructions rather than attestations, are additional MIA borrowings:

62. *dahaga* ‘thirst’ (cf. Javanese ꦢꦒꦒꦁ ‘to have an appetite (for)’) has been connected to Sanskrit *dāha* ‘burning, combustion; internal heat’ (Gonda 1973, p. 399; De Casparis 1997, p. 41; Jones 2007, p. 53). This etymon is reflected as Ardhamāgadhī *dāha* ‘act of burning; act of catching fire’, Tamil *tākam* ‘thirst; eagerness, desire; lust’, Malayalam *dāham* ‘burning; thirst, ardent desire’, Kannada *dāha* ‘burning; ardent desire; thirst’ and Telugu *daga* ‘heat, thirst’. It appears from the Dravidian attestations that the semantic extension to ‘thirst’ already took place on the Indian Subcontinent. I would argue that the direct precursor was a MIA reflex of Sanskrit *dāhaka* ‘burning, setting on fire’ (**dāhaga*). See the next example (63) on the homophonous Malay *dahaga* ~ *dahaga* ‘insubordination’.

⁴² Both forms coexist in Salako, which features *tau* ~ *talū* ‘three’ alongside *tiga* in the same meaning.

63. *dəhaga* ‘insubordination’, with the alternative forms *dahaga* and *dahagi* (cf. Javanese *dəgo* ‘to disregard (orders)’, Minangkabau *dago* ‘opposition, resistance’, Tagalog *duhagi* ‘oppression, ill-treatment’), is of uncertain origin. Semantically, the word is reminiscent of Malay *durhaka* ~ *dərhaka* ‘disobedience to lawful authority, disloyalty, treason’ (cf. Old Javanese *drohaka* ~ *druhaka* ‘malicious, false, perfidious; villain, wrong-doer’, Minangkabau *durako* ‘unfaithful, treacherous, traitor, etc.’, Madurese *dhèrèka* ‘disobedient to God, disloyal to one’s parents’, Makasar *doraka* ‘crime, disloyalty, disobedient, etc.’, Tagalog †*dolohaka* ‘to gloss over someone’s words’), which features in Old Malay epigraphy as *drohaka* ‘revolt, treason’. Kern (1880, p. 548) has connected the latter to Sanskrit *drohaka*, which, to the best of my knowledge, is only attested on the Khoh copper-plate inscription of the Mahārāja Saṁkṣobha (Nagod, Madhya Pradesh), dated to 528/9 CE; the relevant passage reads *cora-drohaka-varjah* ‘with the exception of thieves and mischief-doers’ (Fleet 1963, pp. 115–16). This term evidently goes back to *droha* ‘injury, mischief, treachery, etc.’ with the suffix *-ka*. I would argue that the WMP attestations are derived from **dohaga*, an unattested MIA reflex of *drohaka*. In support, we may call attention to Ardhamāgadhī *doha* ‘doing an evil turn with jealousy or enmity’.
64. *gūliga* or *gəliga* ‘talismanic or curative bezoar; snake-stone’ (cf. Old Javanese *guliga* ‘a certain medicament’, Makasar *guliga* ‘magic stone’, Angkola-Mandailing Batak *bulige* ‘bezoar or intestinal stone, usually from the porcupine’) can be connected to Sanskrit *guḍikā* ‘a pill; a kernel’ (also *gulikā*)—itself ultimately derived from *guda* (see example 11). The transmission must have taken place through an unattested MIA **gūligā* (cf. Ardhamāgadhī *guliā* ‘indigo, a medicinal pill’).
65. *kəndaga* ‘oblong ornamental box’ (cf. Javanese *kəndəgo* ‘an oblong box for keeping valuables’, Makasar *kandaga* ‘k.o. chest of trunk from Maluku’) may be compared to Sanskrit *karaṇḍaka* ‘a basket’, which consists of *karaṇḍa* ‘a basket or covered

box of bamboo wicker-work’ + suffix *-ka*. This form is reflected as Ardhamāgadhī *karāṇḍaga* ‘a small box or basket (made of bamboo)’, Tamil *karāṇṭakam* ‘basket made of plaited coconut-leaves; small metal box’ and Malayalam *karāṇḍakam* ‘chunam box of betel chewers’. The direct precursor to the WMP forms may be reconstructed as MIA **kāṇḍaga* through elision of the intervocalic /r/. The presence of Tamil *kāṇṭam* ‘jewel box; ewer’ (presumably reflecting Sanskrit *karāṇḍa*) and *kāṇṭakam* ‘pot with a spout, ewer’ (< *karāṇḍaka*) suggest that this innovation already took place somewhere on the Indian Subcontinent.

66. *kəpulaga* ‘cardamom (*Elettaria cardamomum* (L.) Maton)’ (cf. Old Javanese *kapulaga*, Sundanese *kapolaga*, Acehnese *gapulaga* ~ *gapunana* ~ *gapunaga* ~ *kapulaga*) has a somewhat enigmatic etymology. Other Old Javanese words for ‘cardamom’ are *karkolaka* and *kakkolaka* (Van der Tuuk 1897–1912/2, pp. 76, 130), which appear to reflect Sanskrit *kakkola* ‘a species of plant; a perfume prepared from the berries of this plant’ (cf. Ardhamāgadhī *kakkola* ‘a kind of fruit’) and especially *kakkolaka* ‘the above perfume’ (*kakkola* + suffix *-ka*). The form *karkolaka* is presumably “hyper-Sanskrit” for *kakkolaka*, following the regular sound correspondence between Sanskrit /rk/ and MIA /kk/ (cf. Pischel 1900, p. 197). As can be seen from the above glosses, it is uncertain which plant was denoted by the Sanskrit attestations. An identification with ‘cardamom’ would be plausible in view of Tibetan *ka ko la* ‘cardamom’, Pāzand *kākura*, Arabic *qāqulaʿ* and Aramaic *q-q-w-l-g* (Hoogervorst 2013, p. 20, figure 4). If this is correct, an unattested MIA **kakkōlaga* could have given rise to the Southeast Asian attestations, although the presence of an intervocalic /p/ instead of /kk/ remains unexplained.
67. *səligi* ‘wooden dart or javelin’ (cf. Old Javanese *suligi* ‘a kind of spear, javelin’, Minangkabau *suligi* ‘lance, spear’, Angkola-Mandailing Batak *suligi* ‘splinter’, Tagalog *suligi* ‘dart, small spear or lance’) is presumably the “i-form” of an undocumented MIA **sūliga*, reflecting Sanskrit *śūlika* ‘having a spear or

any sharp instrument; one who impales criminals; a spit for roasting'.⁴³ Ardhamāgadhī exhibits the related compound *sūliya-bhinnā* 'penetrated by a stake'. The reconstruction of MIA **sūliga* is further supported by the obsolete Malay form †*soliga* 'pike (without iron)' (Eysinga 1855, p. 711). If this etymology is correct, high-level Austronesian reconstructions of this form, such as proto-Hesperonesian **suligiq* 'bamboo spear' (Zorc 1994, p. 552), must be rejected.

In addition, Malay displays a small set of "substandard" forms with /ga/, attested alongside their "correct" counterparts with /ka/. These marginal forms are listed below:

68. *anega* 'kind, species', a substandard form of *aneka*, may go back to a MIA reflex of Sanskrit *aneka* 'not one, many, much', such as Ardhamāgadhī *anega* 'many, more than one'.
69. *loga* is only attested as part of the compound *syurgaloga* 'heaven of Śiva', a less common form of *syurgaloka*, both reflecting Sanskrit *svargaloka* 'the celestial world, Indra's heaven'. The first element of this hybrid compound has been interpreted as a hyper-Arabization of Sanskrit *svarga* 'heaven' (Gonda 1973, p. 160, n. 23).⁴⁴ The second element can be connected to a MIA reflex of Sanskrit *loka* 'free or open space; region; the

⁴³ This form consists of *sūli(n)* 'having a dart or pike, armed with a spear' + suffix *-ka*. The former goes back to *sūla* 'a sharp iron pin or stake, spike, spit (on which meat is roasted)', which has also been borrowed directly into Malay as *sula* 'spit, sharp stake, spitting, impaling' (cf. Old Javanese *sūla* 'pike, lance', Balinese *sula* 'a skewer, spit, pointed stick', Tagalog †*solá* 'to impale', Cebuano *sūla* 'unopened terminal stem of plants that are sharp').

⁴⁴ It should be borne in mind that fluctuation between /s/, /sy/ and /sw/ is particularly common in Javanese, e.g. Old Javanese *aweša* ~ *awesya* ~ *aweswa* 'to invite to come, summon, call', *uswan* ~ *əsyān* 'fire-drill', *sopadi* ~ *swapadi* ~ *syapadi* 'in comparison with, rather than' (< prefix *sa-* + *upadi* 'limitation, qualification, special condition', reflecting Sanskrit *upādhi* 'a substitute; limitation, qualification'), *swasa* ~ *sosya* (see example 94) and modern Javanese *kasyasih* ~ *kaswasih* 'inspiring pity', *kuswə* (lit.) ~ *kosyə* 'to kiss', *nusə* (lit.) ~ *nusyə* 'island', *sisyə* (lit.) ~ *siswə* 'student, pupil' (< Sanskrit *śiṣya* 'a pupil, scholar, disciple'), *wisə* ~ *wiswə* ~ *wisyə* 'poison' (< Sanskrit *viṣa* 'poison, venom').

wide space or world’, such as Ardhamāgadhī *loga* ‘world, universe’.

70. *naraga* ‘hell’ (cf. Minangkabau *narago*), corresponding to the more common attestations *nāraka* and *naraka* (cf. Minangkabau *narako*, Makasar *naraka*, Maranao *narka?*, Tagalog *narkâ* ~ *narakâ*), presumably goes back to a MIA reflex of Sanskrit *naraka* ‘hell’, such as Ardhamāgadhī *naraga* ‘a hell-abode for sinners’.

The following postulated MIA loanwords are restricted to Old Javanese:

71. *ganaga* ‘copper’, used alongside *tambaga* (see example 60), may reflect Sanskrit *kanaka* ‘of gold, golden’ through a MIA source, such as Ardhamāgadhī *kaṇaga* ‘gold’. The word-initial /g/ for an earlier /k/ in Old Javanese does not stand in isolation, cf. *gusali* ~ *gosali* (example 39) and Table 9.1.
72. *kañcuga* ‘a dress fitting close to the upper part of the body, armour, mail; bodice, jacket’ reflects Sanskrit *kañcuka* ‘a dress fitting close to the upper part of the body, armour, mail’ through a MIA language, such as Ardhamāgadhī *kañcuga* ‘a bodice worn by women’.
73. *laṇḍuga* ‘a kind of sweetmeat’ reflects Sanskrit *laṇḍuka* ‘a kind of sweetmeat (made of coarsely ground gram or other pulse, or of corn-flour, mixed with sugar and spices, and fried in ghee or oil)’ through a MIA source, such as Ardhamāgadhī *laṇḍuga* ‘sweet-ball’. The homorganic prenasalisation of /ḍ/ and other stops is common in WMP languages (cf. Table 9.1).
74. *maṇḍaga* ‘rice gruel; an adornment (on the cheek), made with paste?’ ultimately reflects Sanskrit *maṇḍaka* ‘rice gruel; a sort of pastry or baked flour’. The borrowing presumably took place through a MIA language, such as Ardhamāgadhī *maṇḍaga* ‘a sweet cake etc.’.
75. *saragi* ‘a copper kettle or pot’ appears to be an “i-form” going back to a MIA reflex of Sanskrit *saraka* ‘a drinking vessel,

goblet', such as Ardhamāgadhī *saraga* 'a winnowing basket woven out of a kind of weed'. Tamil *carākai* 'metal cup' presumably reflects the same Sanskrit etymon.

The following tentative MIA loanwords in Old Javanese are based on hypothetical reconstructions:

76. *bandoga* has been interpreted as 'pandanus fruit' (Van der Tuuk 1897–1912/4, p. 850; Zoetmulder 1982, p. 203). As the etymology of botanical names is notoriously difficult, the following two mutually exclusive etymologies remain tentative: 1) from Sanskrit *bandhūka* '*Pentapetes phoenicea* L.; *Terminalia tomentosa* Wight & Arn.' through an unattested MIA **bandhūga*, or 2) from Sanskrit *bhaṇḍuka* 'Indian trumpet flower (*Oroxylum indicum* (L.) Kurz)'⁴⁵ through an unattested MIA **bhaṇḍuga*. In view of the retroflex consonants in the latter form, it may be pointed out that modern Javanese displays the obsolete form †*paṇḍogo* 'pandanus fruit' (Jansz 1932, p. 798). We may also compare Tamil *paṇṭukam* 'bishop's weed; red-flowered West Indian pea-tree'.⁴⁶ It should, however, be pointed out that none of the plants listed here closely resemble each other.

77. *kalyāga* 'name of a tree from the bark of which a red dye is made; (dyed) red' (cf. Balinese *kaliaga* 'of reddish yellow colour')⁴⁷ is presumably the same word as *kalyagā* 'a kind of cloth (men's cloths, always reckoned in pairs)' of Old Javanese epigraphy, as listed by De Casparis (1988, p. 59). A semantic shift from 'red dye' to 'a kind of cloth' is not hard to fathom if we imagine that this type of cloth was dyed yellowish red through the use of a certain tree (cf. examples 43 and 44). If so, I propose that the direct precursor

⁴⁵ The outdated gloss '*Calosanthus indica*' is used in the original source (Monier-Williams 1899, p. 745).

⁴⁶ The botanical names of these plants are *Trachyspermum ammi* (L.) Sprague and *Sesbania grandiflora* (L.) Pers.

⁴⁷ Glossed as such in Ruddyanto (2008, p. 335) and absent in other Balinese dictionaries.

is a MIA form reflecting Sanskrit *kāliyaka* ‘a yellow fragrant wood (perhaps sandalwood or *Agallochum*)’ or *kālīyaka* ‘a kind of turmeric (*Curcuma zanthorrhiza* Roxb.)’. I have found no such form (?**kaliyaga*) in the available dictionaries, but we may call attention to Tamil *kaliyakam* ‘seeds of conessi bark’.

78. *kamalagi* ~ *kambaligi* ~ *kamaligi* ~ *kamal* ‘tamarind (*Tamarindus indica* L.)’—a plant of presumed African origins and of considerable antiquity on the Indian Subcontinent (Asouti and Fuller 2008, p. 104)—is attested in Old Balinese as *kamalagi* ~ *camalagi* (Christie 2004, p. 53) and in Ibanag as *kalamagi*. The word-initial /c/ in the Old Balinese attestation does not stand in isolation and is reflected by Gayo *acamlagi*, Balinese *cəlagi*, Minangkabau *cumalagi*, Malay (Kedah dial.) *cəlagi*, Ilokano *salamági* and Cebuano *sambag*, the latter displaying the earlier forms †*sambagi* and †*sambalagi* (cf. De Mentrída 1841, p. 323). Makasar has *camba* (cf. Bugis *campā*), but *cambalagi* still survives as a toponym in South Sulawesi. The word-initial /k/ in the Old Javanese attestations presumably developed under influence of *kamal* ‘pickled’ (Ras 1968a, p. 550).⁴⁸ Upon comparing Indian terminology, one of the most common Sanskrit words for ‘tamarind’ is *amlaka*, derived from *amla* ‘sour’. Pali exhibits the related form *ambila* ‘sour’, which may have also denoted ‘tamarind’ in view of Old Khmer *’amvil* ~ *’amvil* ‘the tamarind tree’.⁴⁹ Shorto (2006, p. 459) reconstructs proto-Mon-Khmer **m[ɓ]il* ~ **[m]ɓial* ‘tamarind’ on account of modern Khmer *ambil* (អំបិល), Cham *amil*, Acehnese *mɛ*, Vietnamese *me* and a number of other attestations, but acknowledges its ultimate Pali origins. As the consonant cluster

⁴⁸ Alternatively, the forms have been connected to the toponym *Kamal* on the island Madura, from which a popular variety of tamarind was exported, cf. Ngaju *kamal* ‘tamarind’ (Kern 1952, p. 14). Slametmuljana (1954, p. 77) interprets Old Javanese *kamalagi* as *kamal lagi* ‘sweet tamarind’, although this appears to be a rationalization rather than an etymology.

⁴⁹ In addition, the twelfth century CE lexicon *Abhidhānappadīpikā* exhibits Pali *ambilakā* ‘tamarind’ (Liyanaratne 1994, p. 76).

/ml/ became /mbil/ in MIA (Pischel 1900, p. 205), I propose that a MIA reflex of *amlaka* (*?ambilaga) entered Maritime Southeast Asia, possibly as **ambalagi* through metathesis. The word-initial /c/ in many of the WMP attestations may have developed under influence of seemingly indigenous words, such as Old Javanese *cāmpaluk* ‘young fruit of the tamarind tree’ (Van der Tuuk 1897–1912/1, p. 665), cf. Tagalog *sampalok* ‘tamarind’ and Bikol *sampálok*.

79. *kaṇḍaga* ‘sword, dagger’ has been connected to Sanskrit *kaṇṭaga* ‘a thorn; the point of a pin or needle’ (Gonda 1973, p. 242). I would argue that the form reflects an unattested MIA **khaṇḍaga* ‘sword’. Turner (1966 #3793) reconstructs proto-Indo-Aryan **khaṇḍaka* ‘sword’ (possibly an early borrowing), which seems plausible in view of NIA attestations such as Panjabi *khaṇḍā* ‘a two-edged sword’, Oriya *khaṇḍā* ‘sword’ and Marathi *khāṇḍā* ‘a kind of sword’ (also cf. Tamil *kaṇḍakam* ‘sword’). Old Javanese *kaṇḍa* ‘sword, dagger; arrow?’, which Zoetmulder (1982, p. 789) derives from Sanskrit *kāṇḍa* ‘an arrow’, may equally well go back to one of these NIA attestations.
80. *kanigara* ‘a part. k.o. tree with yellow flowers (*Pterospermum acerifolium* (L.) Willd.)’ (cf. Malay *kanigara* ‘the sun flower (*Helianthus annuus* L.)’, Javanese *kanigoro* ‘fez-like headdress worn by officials at court’) has been interpreted as a MIA reflex of Sanskrit *karṇikāra* ‘*Pterospermum acerifolium* (L.) Willd.’ (Kern 1869, p. 10). I would argue that an unattested MIA **kaṇṇigāra* (cf. Ardhamāgadhī *kaṇṇiyāra*) yielded the WMP attestations.
81. *uṇḍahagi* or *uṇḍagi* ‘craftsman in wood-work, carpenter; skilful, craftsmanlike’ has been connected to Sanskrit *vardhaki* ‘a carpenter’ through a MIA source (De Casparis 1988, pp. 64–65; Hoogervorst 2013, p. 27). In view of the regular shift from /rdh/ to /ḍḍh/ between vowels (Pischel 1900, p. 201), I would reconstruct this form as **vaddhagi* (cf. Ardhamāgadhī *vaddhai* ‘a carpenter’). It would have been nasalized to **vaṇḍhagi* in Southeast Asia (cf. Table 9.1), as reflected by Javanese *uṇḍagi* ‘carpenter, woodworker; skilled’, Sasak †*bāṇḍagi* ‘carpenter’, Lampung †*dahagi* ~ †*duhagi*, Tagalog *anluwagi* ~ *anluagi*

~ *alwagi*, Bikol *anluwagi* ~ *anduwagi*, Ilokano *allawági* and Kapampangan *aluwaggi* (cf. Van der Tuuk 1897–1912/1, p. 35). In addition, Old Javanese exhibits the possible doublet *duwahagi* ‘workman, labourer, helping hand, person in an inferior position’. The vowel insertion or *svarabhakti* (dVh) observed in some of the above attestations reflects the historical presence of the aspirated consonant, as shown in Table 9.1. Khmer *vaddhākī* (វដ្តកី) ‘carpenter, wood worker’ must have been borrowed from Pali *vaddhaki* ‘a carpenter, builder, architect, mason’, ultimately reflecting the same Sanskrit protoform.

82. *wariga* is glossed—somewhat unsatisfactorily—by Zoetmulder (1982, p. 2208) as ‘a part. official or functionary’ and refers specifically to a ‘village astrologer’ according to De Casparis (1988, p. 56). The author connects the word to Sanskrit *vārika* ‘the chief person in a court or assembly’. This derivation is no doubt correct if we imagine that the borrowing took place via an unattested MIA **vāriga*. The latter must have become **vāriya* at a later stage of language development, hence Tamil *vāriyam* ‘office of supervision’.

7. NIA Loanwords

Contacts between South and Southeast Asia persist to this day and lexical borrowing between the regions continued long after MIA languages ceased to be mother tongues, around the second half of the first mill. CE. The continuation of interethnic contact across the Bay of Bengal is reflected by archaeological and epigraphic data (Hoogervorst 2013, p. 17). The intermediate developmental stage between MIA and NIA languages (i.e. the modern Indo-Aryan languages such as Hindi, Bengali, etc.), sometimes designated by the cover term *Apabhraṃśa* or ‘Late Prakrit’, is relatively poorly documented. This makes it considerably more difficult to reconstruct protoforms, as has been done in the previous sections. In what follows, I list tentative Malay borrowings from an early NIA source other than modern Hindi.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ See Van Ronkel (1902a), Hamilton (1919) and Jones (2007) on lexical influence from Hindi to Malay.

83. *arwa* ‘saw-edged cutting knife’ has been connected to Hindi *ārā* ‘a saw; a shoe-maker’s knife or awl’ (Hamilton 1919, p. 13; Jones 2007, p. 24), reflecting Sanskrit *ārā* ‘a shoemaker’s awl or knife, a bore, a probe’. In view of the /w/ in the Malay attestation, the direct donor language was probably not Hindi but another NIA language. We may compare Bhojpuri *aruā* ‘spike at the end of a driving stick’ and Maithili *aruā* ‘cobbler’s awl’ (cf. Turner 1966 #1313).
84. *bodoh* ‘stupid’ (cf. Javanese *boḍo* ‘stupid, ignorant’, Madurese *bhuḍhu* ‘stupid’, Balinese *bədu* ‘slow, lazy’, Malagasy *bodo* ‘infantile, childish, young’ and possibly Cham *batauk* ‘idiot, fool, stupid, etc.’) has been tentatively connected to Hindi *buddhū* ‘stupid fellow, blockhead, fool, idiot’ (Gonda 1973, p. 410, n. 83). We may also compare related forms such as Panjabi *buddho* ‘silly’, Nepali *bodho* ‘blunt; sluggish, torpid’, Oriya *bodhukā* ‘dinned, stunned (said of the ear)’, etc. (cf. Turner 1966 #9273). The word-final /h/ in the Malay attestation reflects the aspirated consonant in the NIA reflexes (see Table 9.1).
85. *curi* ‘theft, steal, rob’, featuring in Old Malay as *cūri* ‘thief’, evidently goes back to an Indo-Aryan prototype (Gonda 1973, p. 206). We may call attention to Sanskrit *caurikā* ‘theft’ from the root *cur* ‘to steal’, yielding such NIA forms as Hindi *corī* ‘thieving, theft, robbery’, Bengali *curi* ‘an instance or act of stealing, theft’, Oriya *curi* ‘theft’, etc.
86. *duli* ‘portable cot, litter for sick or wounded’, exhibiting the related form *juli* ‘swinging litter’ (cf. Old Javanese *joli* ‘palanquin’, Javanese *joli*), ultimately goes back to Sanskrit *dolā* ‘litter, hammock, palanquin, swing’ through a NIA source (Gonda 1973, p. 80). The Malay doublet *dola* ‘stretcher, litter’ appears to be a direct Sanskrit loan. As regards the direct origins of *duli*, we may call attention to Hindi *ḍolī* ‘a litter, a kind of sedan (for women); small portable cot’, Bengali *duli* ‘a small covered litter, an improvised palanquin’, Oriya *ḍuli* ‘a small closed sedan chair for carrying a person; a litter’, etc.; i.e. the ‘dhooly’ of British

accounts. Tamil *ṭōli* ‘litter, a kind of sedan’ is apparently derived from one of these NIA forms (word-initial voiced consonants are normally devoiced in Tamil), but neither can explain the word-initial /j/ in Malay *juli* and Javanese *joli*.

87. *kātumbar* ‘coriander (*Coriandrum sativum* L.)’ (cf. Acehnese *kātumba* ~ *gātumba* ‘coriander seed’, Javanese *tumbar*, Madurese *katombhər*, Cebuano †*katumbal* ‘chilli’)⁵¹ is often connected to Tamil *kottamalli* in the same meaning. The presence of NIA forms such as Hindi *kothmīr*, Oriya *kōthamiri* and Marathi *kōthimbīr*, as well as the Tamil and other Dravidian attestations (cf. Emenau and Burrow 1962, p. 26), would allow the MIA reconstruction **kōtthambarī* (cf. Turner 1966 #3380). However, we may also call attention to Sanskrit *kustumbarī* ‘the plant coriander’ and Ardhamāgadhī *kutthumbharī* ‘a collection of coriander plants’, exhibiting /u/ in the second syllable. A hypothetical NIA reflex with /u/ in that position (**?kuthumbar*) may have given rise to the WMP attestations.

88. *kodi* ‘corge, (roughly) score’ (cf. Acehnese *kudṛə*, Gayo *kudi*, Karo Batak *kodi*) may be connected to such NIA forms as Hindi *korī* ‘an aggregate of twenty, a score’, Marathi *koḍī* ‘a score; a corge’, Bengali *kudī* ‘twenty’, etc. This word cannot be reconstructed to proto-Indo-Aryan. It is also found in Dravidian languages, e.g. Tamil *kōṭi* ‘a score, as in counting precious stones, silk, etc.’ and Malayalam *kōṭi* ‘the number of twenty, a score’. It is uncertain whether the WMP languages acquired their attestations through Indo-Aryan or Dravidian languages. Khmer *kaḷī* (កាឡី) ‘a unit of measurement of 20 pieces of cloth’ and Thai *kulī* (กุลี) ‘package of 20 pieces of cloth, score’ are presumably also related. Ultimately, the word has been assigned to a Munda source (Przyluski 1929, pp. 25–32).

⁵¹ Old Javanese has *tumbara*, but this form is only attested in the *Pārthayajña* as part of the segment *tumbara kəcūr*, which may actually represent *tumbar akəcūr* (Zoetmulder 1982, p. 2060), thus corresponding to the other WMP forms.

89. *kunci* ‘lock or bolt’, but predominantly ‘key’ in modern usage (cf. Old Javanese *kuñci* ‘key’, Madurese *konci* ‘key’, Tagalog *kunsī* ‘bolt, latch’), has been derived from Hindi *kunjī* ‘a key’, reflecting Sanskrit *kuñcīkā* (cf. Ardhamāgadhī *kuñciyā*) in the same meaning (Gonda 1973, p. 158; De Casparis 1997, p. 43, n. 48; cf. Jones 2007, p. 174). In the light of the voiceless affricate, Gujarati *kūcī*, Oriya *kuñci* or a related NIA form are more plausible precursors of the WMP attestations. Presumably, Khmer *kuñcae* (ក្បែរ) and Thai *kuñcē* (กุญแจ) ‘key’ go back to a WMP language with diphthongization of word-final vowels.
90. *ragi* ‘fermenting medium, yeast’ (cf. Old Javanese *ragi* ‘yeast’, Madurese *raghi* ‘fermenting medium’, Acehnesse *ragḍa* ‘yeast, sourdough’) has been connected to Hindi *rāgī* ‘a sort of grain (*Eleusine coracana* (L.) Gaertn.)’ (Wilkinson 1932/2, p. 298). Also known as *mandvā* ~ *maṇḍuā* or in English as ‘finger millet’ or ‘raggy’ (cf. Tamil *irāki*, Malayalam *rāgi*, Telugu *rāgi*, Kannada *rāgi*), this grain is indeed typically made into a flour or fermentation medium in South Asia. Hindi *rāgī* presumably goes back to Sanskrit *rāga* ‘red’, on account of the reddish colour of the millet seeds.⁵²
91. *rani* ‘queen’ ultimately goes back to Sanskrit *rājñī* (Jones 2007, p. 260), allegedly via a “Prakrit” source (De Casparis 1997, p. 30). As the consonant cluster /jñ/ corresponds to MIA /ṇṇ/ (Pischel 1900, p. 191), I propose MIA **raṇṇī* ‘queen’ as the direct precursor of such attestations as Tamil *rāṇi*, Hindi *rānī* and Bengali *rāni* in the same meaning. It remains uncertain which of these attestations gave rise to Malay *rani*, but its complete absence in the Old Javanese literature makes a NIA language our most plausible option.

⁵² If this is correct, Southworth’s derivation of this form from proto-Dravidian **irai* ‘food’ (1988, p. 660) can no longer stand unmodified.

92. *sayang* ‘longing, pitying, love’ (cf. Acehnese *sayang* ‘compassion, affection, love, etc.’)—reconstructed to proto-Malayic as **sayan* ‘pining, longing, pitying; love, affection’ (Adelaar 1992, p. 107)—is often used as an interjection ‘too bad’ (cf. Makasar *sayang* ‘too bad; to find something regrettable’, Tagalog *sayang* ‘too bad, hard luck, what a pity; wasted or uselessly spent’) or as an appellation ‘lover, darling’. In the latter sense, it reminds us of NIA forms such as Hindi *saiyā* ‘master, lord; husband’, which is also often used as an appellation in the meaning ‘lover, beloved’—predominantly by a female to a male. This word is ultimately derived from Sanskrit *svāmin* ‘master; a husband, lover’, also reflected as Panjabi *sāiyā* ‘master’, Nepali *saiyā* ‘a lover, paramour; friend’ (Turner 1966 #13930). If the similarity between the forms is not a chance resemblance, the semantic developments in Malay of ‘longing’, ‘pitying’ and ‘pining’ are secondary to the original meaning of ‘(to) love’ and especially ‘lover, beloved’.
93. *sarapah* ‘cursing, imprecation of evil’, also found as *sarpa* or *sarapa*, has been derived from a MIA reflex of Sanskrit *śāpa* ‘a curse, malediction, imprecation, etc.’ (Gonda 1973, p. 123; De Casparis 1997, p. 33). More specifically, we can connect it to an early NIA source. In the early Avadhī language, used in the work of Tulsīdās (sixteenth/seventeenth century CE), we find *śrāpa* ‘curse’ (Saksena 1971, p. 53). Hindi *srāp* ~ *sarāp* ‘curse, imprecation, malediction’ and Panjabi *sarāph* ‘a curse’ cannot have yielded the Malay attestation, as they reflect a subsequent development in MIA; the dropping of the word-final short /a/.
94. *suai* is only attested in the derivative forms *bərsuai* ‘congruous, in perfect accord’ and *səsuai* ‘perfect fit or match’. Originally, *suai* thus seems to have denoted something along the lines of ‘to fit beautifully’. In form and meaning, it may be compared to Old Avadhī *sohai* ‘looks nice’, Old Gujarati *sohai* ‘shines’ and especially Middle Bengali *sohe* ‘suits, befits’, reflecting Sanskrit *śobhate* ‘beautify, embellish, adorn, etc.’ (Turner 1966 #12636).

I would thus propose that the Malay attestation, which cannot be reconstructed to any deeper level of Malayo-Polynesian, goes back to a NIA source.

95. *suasa* ‘pinchbeck’ (cf. Javanese *suwṛṣṣ*, Toba Batak *suasa*) is an alloy of gold and copper (and sometimes a small ratio of silver) used to manufacture ornaments. The word features in Old Javanese as *nāgaswāsa* ~ *nagasosa* and in the Middle Javanese story *Dewa Ruci* as *sosya* (Zoetmulder 1982, p. 1808).⁵³ Van Ronkel (1902b, p. 109) derives it from Tamil *cokucā* ‘pinchbeck, gold-like alloy of copper and zinc’, which is implausible on phonological grounds. Instead, we may consider a NIA origin, such as Hindi *suāśā* ‘an alloy of gold and copper’ (Hoogervorst 2013, p. 26). I would argue that the Hindi attestation reflects the unattested Sanskrit compound **sukamśa*, consisting of *su* ‘good, beautiful, well, very, etc.’ and *kaṁśa* ‘white copper, brass, bell-metal’—the intervocalic /k/ would have elided in NIA. If Tamil *cokucā* is at all related, the phonological specifics require further analysis.
96. *suji* ‘embroidery’ (cf. Old Javanese *suji* ‘spine, quill (of a porcupine); embroidery, embroidered piece of cloth’, Sundanese *suji* ‘quill (of a porcupine)’, Acehnese *sujaḥ*, Makasar *suji* ‘embroidery’, Tagalog †*sori* ‘needle used in weaving, sharp point’) has been tentatively connected to Sanskrit *sūcī* ‘to sew; a needle or any sharp pointed instrument’, although the presumed shift from /c/ to /j/ remains unexplained (Gonda 1973, p. 491). Normally, /c/ between vowels elides completely in MIA (Pischel 1900, p. 137), e.g. Ardhamāgadhī *sūt* ‘needle’. However, NIA attestations such as Hindi *sūjī* ‘a needle, a small awl’ and Oriya *śuji* ‘needle’, apparently *tadbhavas* of the Sanskrit prototype, may have given rise to the WMP forms.

⁵³ The use of Sanskrit *nāga* ‘serpent-demon’ as the first element of this compound is remarkable. It is also attested in Malayalam as *nāgacembu* ‘pinchbeck’ (*cembu* = ‘copper’).

97. *sundal* ‘whore, prostitute’ (cf. Old Javanese *sundəl*, Madurese *sondhəl*, Balinese *sundəl*) has been connected to Sanskrit *caṇḍāla* ‘an outcast’ (Wilkinson 1932/2, p. 502). This is implausible on phonological grounds, including the dental instead of an expected retroflex prenasalized consonant in Old Javanese. Furthermore, the alleged Sanskrit precursor has in fact been borrowed into Malay as *cəndala* ~ *jəndala* ‘low, mean, ignoble, depraved’. The superficial similarity of the WMP attestations with Sanskrit *śuṇḍā* ‘a harlot, prostitute, bawd’ must also be fortuitous. Instead, we may call attention to Marathi *śindal* ‘whorish, unchaste, incontinent’, which reflects MIA *chiṇṇālīā* ‘having the line broken’ (Turner 1966 #5048). If these words are indeed related, I cannot account for the unexpected /u/ in Malay and other WMP languages.
98. *unta* ‘camel’ (cf. Javanese *unta*, Madurese *onta*, Cham *antā* ~ *untā*) is ultimately derived from Sanskrit *uṣṭra* ‘camel’ (Gonda 1973, pp. 139, 158). Khmer *ūtth* (ឫក្ខ) and Thai *ūtth* (อุฐ) presumably go back to the related Pali form *oṭṭha* in the same meaning. Old Javanese displays a lot of fluctuation: *uṣṭra* ~ *oṣṭra* ~ *hoṣṭra* ~ *koṣṭra* ~ *noṣṭra* ~ *onta* ~ *konta*. The latter two forms were probably borrowed via the above Malay attestation, as we would otherwise expect retroflex consonants. It seems unlikely that camels have often set hoof on pre-colonial Java, hence the palpable confusion about them in the literature. NIA forms such as Hindi and Marathi *uṇṭ* are too recent to have yielded the Malay attestation, as they display the ‘dropped’ word-final /a/ (cf. example 93). In all likelihood, the Malay form was borrowed during an intermediate stage between MIA (cf. Ardhamāgadhī *uṭṭa* ‘a camel’) and the above NIA forms, some of which indeed reflect the historical cluster /ṣṭ/ as /ṇṭ/ (Bhayani 1997, pp. 6–7). Illustratively, Braj Bhāṣā, one of the archaic varieties of the Hindi dialect continuum, exhibits *ūṇṭa* in the same meaning.

The distribution of the following tentative NIA loanwords appears to be restricted to Old Javanese:

99. *drak* is equated by Zoetmulder (1982, p. 415) to *drākṣa* ‘a part. kind of beverage, wine?’, reflecting Sanskrit *drākṣā* ‘vine, grape; made of grapes’. If this is correct, the former attestation, which is only attested in a *kakawin* text entitled *Khāṇḍawawanadahana*, may have entered the Old Javanese literature through a NIA language, cf. Gujarati *darākh* ‘grapes’.
100. *ghāṣa* ‘to strike (grind, rub) together; to chafe, etc.’, which also occurs as *gas*, has been connected to Sanskrit *gharṣa* ‘rubbing, friction’ (Zoetmulder 1982, p. 498). If this is indeed the ultimate precursor, I propose a transmission through a NIA language, cf. Gujarati *ghās* ‘wear and tear’, Panjabi *ghās* ‘friction’, Bengali *ghaṣā* ‘to rub’.
101. *mahari* ~ *mari* ‘small pavilion, bower’, which exhibits the secondary form *mahantən*,⁵⁴ has been connected to Hindi *mahārī* ‘a stately dwelling, an edifice, a palace, mansion, house’ (Gonda 1973, pp. 80, 640). Needless to say, the presence of *mahantən* in the Old Javanese *kakawin* literature predates by centuries the emergence of the language now known as Hindi. It seems nonetheless likely that the borrowing took place through an undocumented NIA reflex, ultimately going back to Sanskrit *mahālaya* ‘a great dwelling’.

Finally, it should be pointed out that—already in Old Javanese—the historical word-final vowel of certain Indo-Aryan loanwords is lacking, e.g. *aṅkus* ‘an elephant-driver’s hook’ (cf. Sanskrit *aṅkuśa*, Hindi *aṅkus*), *atal* ‘ochre’ (cf. Sanskrit *haritāla* ‘yellow orpiment or sulphuret of arsenic’, Hindi *hartāl* ‘orpiment’), *kapas* ‘cotton-tree,

⁵⁴ The substitution of the last syllable of a loanword (as well as some indigenous vocabulary) by the segment /ntən/ is quite common in Javanese (Hoogervorst 2016). See Adelaar (1992, p. 52, fn. 95) on the same phenomenon in Malay.

cotton’ (cf. Sanskrit *karpāsa*, Hindi *kapās*), *mās* ~ *mas* ‘gold, golden’ (cf. Sanskrit *māṣa* ‘a bean; a weight of gold’, Hindi *māṣ* ‘a kind of bean, *Vigna radiata* (L.) R.Wilczek’) and *tal* ‘a part. k.o. palm-tree (*Borassus flabellifer* L.)’ (cf. Sanskrit *tāla*, Hindi *tāl*). While the phonological process of short vowel deletion (*hrasva*) is typically associated with NIA languages such as Hindi, its manifestations in Old Javanese may also be due to vernacular pronunciations or borrowing through a third language, such as Old Khmer (cf. Hoogervorst 2016).

8. Concluding Remarks

The linguistic data presented and analyzed in this study should suffice to dispel the alleged paucity of “Prakrit” vocabulary in pre-modern Southeast Asia, in particular the (pen)insular regions in direct contact with the Indian Ocean World. The 101 proposed MIA etyma, either directly attested or reconstructed through regular sound correspondences, represent an underexplored dimension of cultural contact characterized by the transmission of practical concepts, techniques, manufactured products and cultural items, many of which are of a distinctly cultural or commercial nature. It transpires from the lexical data discussed here that an early form of Ardhamāgadhī or a closely related language—possibly a generic East Indian “Prakrit”—played an important and overlooked role in the history of language contact across the Bay of Bengal.

The lexical transmissions addressed in this study permit some general observations regarding the adoption of Indo-Aryan linguistic features in Maritime Southeast Asia. The high sociolinguistic status of Sanskrit led to a preponderance of Sanskrit loans in the literary registers of Old Javanese, Malay and other WMP languages, while Prakritisms were presumably avoided or “corrected” as much as possible. Historically, we may therefore assume a much greater MIA influence in the vernaculars that have escaped the attention and interest of courtly scribes. Indeed, it seems that notions of language hierarchy led to the deliberate erasure of *tadbhava* vocabulary across Maritime Southeast Asia’s Indian-inspired

literature, being largely substituted by *tatsama* equivalents at a time when Sanskrit was still widely understood among literati. In support of this claim, I have called attention to Indic grammatical analogy patterns in Old Javanese—such as the use of the Sanskrit suffix *-ka*, including onto Indic loanwords that did not originally have the suffix—and processes of hypercorrection.

Beyond these observations, however, presenting a coherent macroscenario behind the lexical transmissions proposed here is beset by several difficulties. Chief among them is the issue of chronology. The earliest literary attestations of MIA loanwords are found in Old Javanese literature and epigraphy dated no earlier than the ninth century CE. The archaeological record informs us that contact with India, commercial or otherwise, predates this textual evidence by many centuries. Did the loanwords enter Southeast Asia at a time when the proposed MIA donor languages were still spoken, or were they adopted from semi-artificial literary languages, akin to India's "Dramatic Prakrits" and Ardhamāgadhī? The presence of a small set of NIA borrowings in Old Javanese (and Malay) presumably reflects contact with different speech communities, but whether these differences were chronological, regional or both remains to be examined.

Future research might determine whether the detected MIA adstrate in Maritime Southeast Asia resembles that of South India, Sri Lanka and the Southeast Asian mainland. It has also been beyond the scope of this study to examine Indo-Aryan loanwords into Southeast Asia that were transmitted via tertiary sources, such as Dravidian or Austro-Asiatic languages. While this study rejects some Tamil-mediated etymologies prevalent in the wider literature, the Dravidian element in Old Javanese and other Southeast Asian languages merits a detailed analysis on its own (cf. Hoogervorst 2015). It has proven difficult to determine on linguistic grounds whether certain loanwords have reached Southeast Asia through Dravidian or MIA languages. A closer look at the situation in South India will undoubtedly yield significant further insights in the ethno-linguistic history of the Bay of Bengal.

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10

WHO WERE THE FIRST MALAGASY, AND WHAT DID THEY SPEAK?

Alexander Adelaar¹

1. Introduction

In this chapter I investigate the way Malagasy split off from other Austronesian languages, and the sociopolitical circumstances under which this may have happened.

Malagasy is an Austronesian language spoken in a variety of dialects in Madagascar. It is a member of the South East Barito (henceforth SEB) language subgroup, the members of which² are predominantly spoken on

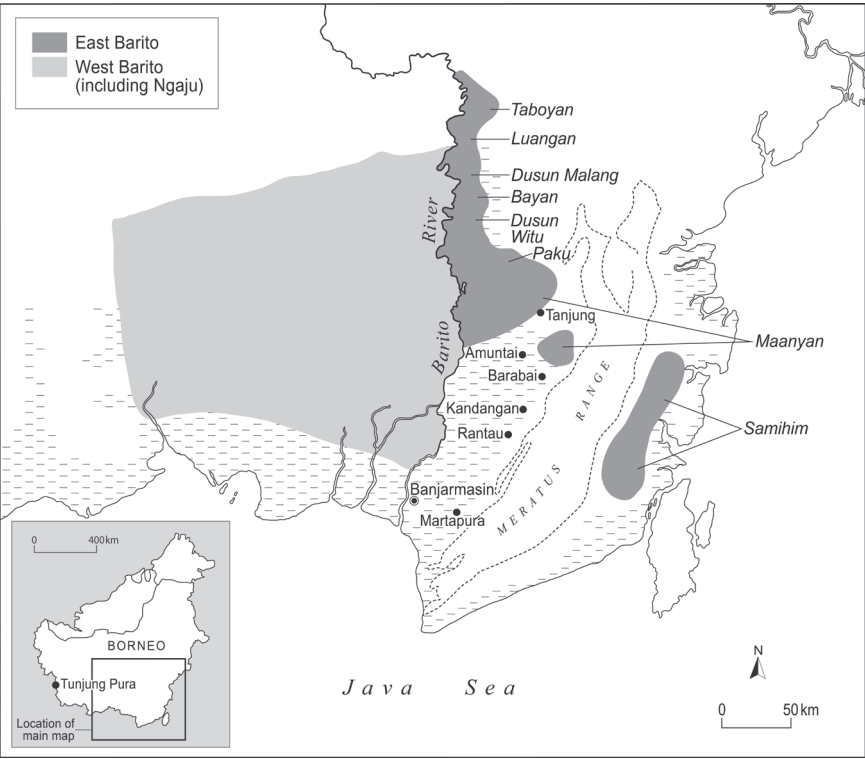
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² These members are Ma'anyan, Samihim, Dusun Malang, Dusun Witu and Bayan. Paku is sometimes also included, but it has a slightly different phonological history (Dahl 1977; Mahdi 1988).

the eastern shores of the Barito River in South Borneo (Dahl 1951; see Map 10.1). This region is considered the original homeland of Malagasy.

Malagasy underwent influence from Malay and Javanese, the hegemonic languages *par excellence* in insular South East Asia (henceforth ISEA), as well as from Sanskrit. In fact, the Sanskrit loanwords in Malagasy can be shown to have been borrowed via Malay and Javanese, and not directly from a source in South Asia. Malagasy also borrowed from Austronesian languages close to South Borneo homeland: it has loanwords from South Sulawesi languages (Adelaar 1995*a*), and from Ngaju (Dahl 1951), which is spoken west of the Barito River (see Map 10.1).

MAP 10.1



The Malagasy Homeland and the East Barito Language Area in South Borneo

Source: Author.

Malay, Javanese and Sanskrit loanwords testify to the fact that already very early onwards the Malays and Javanese were passing on to other peoples in ISEA Indic cultural influences that had been transformed by their own local cultures. This must already have happened on a large scale around the time that ancestors of the present-day Malagasy people began to migrate to East Africa, which was possibly in the seventh century AD,³ if not earlier (see Map 10.2). Malay loanwords

MAP 10.2



The Indian Ocean Region Including East Africa, Madagascar and East Asia

Source: Author.

³ See Adelaar (1989, p. 32). Kumar (2011, p. 92) argues that the migrations could have taken place several centuries earlier. While this remains a possibility, the seventh century AD is still a more likely date given that (1) the Malagasy migration is linked to the rise of Srivijaya (for which there is no evidence prior to the seventh century AD), (2) the settlement of Madagascar by SEB speakers must have begun in the eighth century AD (Wright and Fanony 1992), and (3) Buddhism was particularly strong in ISEAS in the sixth to eighth centuries AD (as shown in this chapter).

also enable us to see that the ancestors of the Malagasy were not only in touch with Malays in Borneo but also with Malays from Sumatra. They were so for a considerably long time, starting from before the first migrations to East Africa and continuing until after the Portuguese made their appearance in the Indian Ocean region (sixteenth century AD; Adelaar 2009, p. 158). Some Malay loanwords in East Madagascar have a Muslim signature, indicating that Islam may have been introduced from ISEA to this part of the island; other loanwords are from South Sulawesi languages, showing that there was a certain measure of inter-insular contact and ethnic integration going on across ISEA, something that does not readily appear from historical evidence based on written records (Adelaar 1995a). These loanwords give us a glimpse of ISEA and Madagascar as parts of an interconnected world in the past.

An intriguing question remains what the Malagasy homeland in Borneo looked like from a geographical, social, and political perspective. We also do not know how and under what circumstances SEB speaking people ended up in East Africa. Were they members of ethnic communities that can still be identified today, such as the Ma'anyan and Samihim, or had they already acquired a separate identity prior to their impressive migration(s) across the Indian Ocean?

There is probably no definite answer to the last question, but if we rephrase it as a linguistic one, we may be able to throw some light on the matter: did these migrants speak an early form of one of the SEB languages still extant today, or had they already formed a separate speech community? The direction of the answer may help us to determine the social position of the early Malagasy people vis-à-vis the Malays. If, upon their departure, they spoke an early form of one of the current East Barito languages, one may surmise that they were recruited as a sort of subordinate labourers from local traditional communities that existed at the time (Adelaar 1995a; Kumar 2011), and this conceivably happened under force. On the other hand, if they had already begun to have their own SEB dialect in Borneo, they may have formed a group that was distinct from other SEB speaking societies, and they may have co-existed in a symbiotic relationship

with Malays. The interaction with these Malays might have been on a more egalitarian basis, or at least, it might have been on a basis under-emphasizing the actual power relation involved (see below, Section 3). In both scenarios, they may have been employed as crew members on Malay ships.

In an endeavour to find answers to these questions, I will investigate two issues. First, what can the linguistic information we have about Malagasy and other SEB languages tell us about the time when Malagasy became a separate language? Was it before or after the early Malagasy went to Africa? And second, what historical information do we have about the homeland of the early Malagasy in South Borneo? How does it fit in with the hypothesis that they already had their own language before migrating to East Africa? And with the idea of a symbiosis between local Malay rulers (this time in South Borneo) and some of the surrounding indigenous peoples? I will address these issues in Sections 2 and 3 and I will end with a conclusion in Section 4.

2. Proto-Malagasy was Already a Separate Speech Form in Borneo: Linguistic Evidence

While this is not an altogether obvious issue, there are strong indications that when Malagasy speakers were still in South Borneo, they already spoke a distinct dialect. Malagasy was probably not just an early form of one of the extant SEB languages, which after the migration(s) to East Africa underwent post-migratory changes that can generally be ascribed to contact with languages in situ. Linguistic evidence for this is given in the following sub-sections 2.1 and 2.2.

Unless specified otherwise, the Malagasy data in this chapter represent the Merina dialect, which is spoken in the central highlands of Madagascar and was the basis for the development of standard Malagasy. Ma'anyan is taken as default sample language for SEB, as it is the only SEB language that is sufficiently documented for comparative use. It is spoken east of the Barito River in the Central and South Kalimantan provinces of Indonesian Borneo.

2.1 Reflexes of Proto-Malayo-Polynesian *ɣ in Malagasy and Ma'anyan

Proto-Malayo-Polynesian (henceforth PMP) had a consonant *ɣ, which must have been a velar fricative.⁴ In SEB languages, this *ɣ became either *y or Ø (that is to say, it was lost). In Ma'anyan the *y reflex has remained y (and occasionally j as a secondary development), but in Merina and most other dialects of Malagasy it evolved further into z. A schematic representation of the changes looks as follows:

PMP *ɣ > Proto SEB *y > Ma'anyan y, (/j), Malagasy z
(y in some vernacular dialects)

Proto SEB Ø > Ma'anyan Ø (/ʔ)⁵, Malagasy Ø

This creates the impression that *ɣ developed in parallel ways in both languages, but this is not entirely the case: while they both reflect *y or Ø, they differ in the way these two reflexes are distributed in their respective lexicons. Compare Table 10.1, showing some of the different reflexes of PMP *ɣ found in Malagasy and Ma'anyan. (In the glosses below and in the following pages, “id.” stands for “same meaning as previous word”).

On the whole, Malagasy has more *y reflexes than Ma'anyan.⁶ The different ways in which these languages reflect *y and Ø are a strong indication that they had already become different dialects before Malagasy speakers left Borneo. They are most likely the result of borrowing between different SEB dialects in an early stage of their divergence: apparently, some SEB varieties changed PMP *ɣ to *y, and others lost *ɣ altogether. Through continued contact among these varieties, and (possibly) motivated by sociolinguistic differences between them, some varieties ended up with two reflexes of *ɣ. This apparently also happened in Ma'anyan

⁴ It is usually represented as *R in the comparative-linguistic literature.

⁵ An epenthetic glottal stop may emerge as a secondary development in positions where a *ɣ was lost.

⁶ This observation is based on the total inventory of *ɣ reflexes in both languages. It is not based on the list presented in Table 10.1, which is not exhaustive and therefore not critical.

TABLE 10.1
Ma'anyan and Malayasy Reflexes of PMP *y in Word-Initial and Intervocalic Position

PMP *y	Ma'anyan j	Malagasy z	(Malay)	(Javanese)
*yatus 'hundred'	jatuh 'id.'	zātu 'id.'	ratus 'id.'	atos 'id.'
*suyuuq 'to order'	huyu 'id.'	—	suruh 'id.'	(suruh 'id.' < Malay)
*təyas ⁷ 'quick, fast'	—	təza 'firm, durable; hardwood'	təras 'hardwood'	—
PMP *y	Ma'anyan Ø	Malagasy z	(Malay)	(Javanese)
*quyat 'nerve, tendon'	uat 'id.'	izatrā 'id.'	urat 'id.'	ot-ot 'muscle'
*bəyat 'heavy'	wəʔat 'heavy'	vəzatrā 'id.'	brat 'id.'	a-bot 'id.'
*yabun ? 'hazy, dim, vague'	awun 'barely audible (voice)'	zəvunā 'fog'	rabun 'dim (vision)'	awun-awun 'fine rain, dew'
*yumaq 'house'	—	zūma 'cave'	rumah 'house'	omah 'id.'
PMP *y	Ma'anyan Ø	Malagasy Ø	(Malay)	(Javanese)
*baqəyuh 'new; recently'	waʔu 'recently'	vau 'id.'	ba(ha)ru 'now'	wau 'recently'
*suyut 'to recede'	uut 'to drink'	ūtā 'to massage'	surut 'to recede'	(surut < Malay)
*payi 'stingray'	pahi? 'id.'	fāi 'id.'	pari 'id.'	—
*dayaq 'blood'	ira 'id.'	rā 'id.'	darah 'id.'	(Old Javanese) rāh 'id.'
*yasəŋ 'to breathe'	aheŋ 'spirit, thought'	āinā 'life; breath'	—	—
*bəyas 'uncooked rice'	wəzah 'id.'	—	bəras 'id.'	uwos 'id.'
PMP *y (no instances)	Ma'anyan j	Malagasy Ø		

⁷ Blust (online) labels this as a Proto-Western Malayo-Polynesian etymon and reconstructs it with an apical *r; however, the Malayasy evidence favours a velar fricative *y instead.

In Malagasy, the different distribution of *z* and $\emptyset$ reflexes cannot be explained by the presence of Malay or Javanese, the two main languages that influenced Ma'anyan and Malagasy (and kept influencing the latter even after the migrations). Borrowing from Malay is excluded because this language has maintained *r*, which is a very different reflex from $\ast y/z$ or $\emptyset$. Borrowing from Javanese is also impossible: although this language does have $\emptyset$ for $\ast y$, the corresponding Javanese words have structures that are totally different from their Malagasy and Ma'anyan counterparts. Finally, the different distribution of $\ast y$ and $\emptyset$ reflexes can hardly be explained as post-migratory influence on Malagasy from Austronesian languages other than Malay or Javanese, given the improbability of such influence to have reached Malagasy in its East African evolutionary stage (Adelaar 2016).

In the history of SEB languages, PMP *s became *h. This *h was maintained in Ma'anyan but lost in Malagasy, as follows:

In both languages, this change and loss also affected early loanwords from Malay (and possibly other languages), but continued borrowing from these sources were the cause that *s* was eventually re-introduced into the Ma'anyan and Malagasy phoneme systems. As a result, both Malagasy and Ma'anyan have “recent” Malay loanwords maintaining Malay *s*, and “earlier” Malay loanwords showing Ma'anyan *h* and Malagasy Ø for it. (Note that while relative age is the most obvious explanation for the fact that **s* was lost in some loanwords and maintained in others, another important explaining factor may be frequency of usage and level of adaptation of these loanwords).

Whereas both languages share this overall pattern, they do not always maintain *s in the same loanwords, and Malagasy tends to maintain *s

more often than Ma'anyan. These differences suggest that both languages borrowed their Malay loanwords independently. Observe the list in Table 10.2, which is not exhaustive, of Malay loanwords containing *s* that ended up in Malagasy and Ma'anyan:

TABLE 10.2
Malagasy and Ma'anyan Reflexes of *s in Malay Loanwords

Malay	Malagasy	Ma'anyan
<i>S</i> :	<i>S</i> :	<i>S</i>
<i>sədia</i> 'already; admittedly' (< Sanskrit <i>sādhya</i>)	<i>satria</i> 'because'	<i>sadia</i> 'already'
<i>sambaw</i> 'cargo ship'	<i>sambu</i> 'ship, large boat'	<i>sammaw</i> 'celestial ship'
<i>sisā</i> (< Skt <i>śeṣa</i>) 'remains'	<i>sisā</i> 'remains'	—
<i>S</i> :	<i>S</i> :	<i>H</i>
<i>sakay</i> 'subject' (< Sanskrit <i>sakhāy-</i> , accusative form: <i>sakhāyam</i>)	<i>sakaiza</i> 'companion'	<i>hake</i> 'stranger; Muslim'
<i>gasiṅ</i> 'spinning top'	<i>hasinā</i> 'spinning top'	<i>kahiṅ</i> 'spinning top'
<i>salah</i> 'wrong'	<i>salasala</i> 'wrong'	<i>hala</i> 'wrong'
<i>k-asih</i> 'love'	<i>asi</i> 'veneration'	<i>ahi</i> 'compassion'
<i>sakit</i> 'sick, ill' (?)	<i>sahir-anā</i> 'worried, in trouble'	<i>hakit</i> 'difficult'
<i>S</i> :	<i>Ø</i> :	<i>H</i>
<i>suṅṅay</i> 'river'	<i>uni</i> 'river'	<i>huṅṅey</i> 'river'
<i>sampay</i> 'until; (orig. 'to hang')	<i>ampi</i> 'enough'	<i>hampe</i> 'until'
<i>S</i> :	(no corresponding forms)	<i>H</i>
<i>sayan</i> 'sad'	—	<i>hayan</i> 'sad'
<i>sadikit</i> 'a bit'	—	<i>hadikit</i> 'a bit'
<i>soal</i> (< Ar <i>su'āl</i>) 'case, issue'	—	<i>hual</i> 'case, issue'
<i>mahesa</i> (< Skt <i>mahiṣa</i>) 'buffalo'	—	<i>eha</i> 'animal'

2.3 Reflexes of PMP *ti in Malagasy and Other SEB Languages

PMP *ti > (early SEB) *tsi > modern SEB si
> Merina tsi, (si)

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the change also took place in Dusun Deyah,⁸ which does not belong to the SEB subgroup but to the Central-East Barito branch, of which it is the only member:

Proto SEB **tiliŋ* ‘to fly’: Merina *tsidinā*, South Sakalava Malagasy *tili*, Ma’anyan *sidiŋ*, Samihim *s<um>idiŋ* Dusun Deyah *s<amb>iliŋ*, Dusun Malang *min-sidiŋ*, Dusun Witu *s<am>idiŋ*, Paku *s<am>iliŋ* ‘id.’

Proto SEB **witik* ‘ant’: Merina *vitsikā*, South Sakalava Malagasy *vitike*, Samihim, Ma’anyan, Dusun Deyah, Dusun Malang, Paku *wisik*, Dusun Witu *usik* ‘id.’

Proto SEB **punsi* ‘banana’: Merina *akūndru afūntsi* ‘banana species’, Dusun Deyah, Dusun Witu, Ma’anyan *punsi*, Paku *punši* ‘banana’

Proto SEB **t<in>aʔi* ‘guts’: Merina *tsināi*, South Sakalava Malagasy *tināi*, Dusun Deyah, Dusun Witu, Ma’anyan, Paku *sanaʔi* ‘guts’, Dusun Malang *sanai* ‘belly’

Proto SEB **bitih* ‘calf of leg’: Merina *vitsi*, Ma’anyan *wisis*, Samihim *wisih* ‘id.’, North Malagasy *viti* ‘leg’

Proto Malagasy **i tikaN* ‘1st person plural inclusive topicalized nominative pronoun’: Merina *isika*, Tanala *itsika*, Taisaka *intsika* (with nasal accretion); compare also some reflexes derived from Proto Malagasy **tikaN* (without topical marker): Tandroy *tika(ŋe)*, Mahafaly *tika* (Adelaar and Kikusawa 2014, pp. 492–93).

There are some other Malagasy/SEB word pairs reflecting PMP **ti*, but they are less representative because available cognates are limited to Malagasy and Ma’anyan:

⁸ A language currently spoken along the Tabalong River in the northern part of South Kalimantan Province (Indonesian Borneo).

Proto SEB **timpun* ‘to collect’: Merina *tsìmpună*, South Sakalava Malagasy *tìmpu*, Ma’anyan *simpun* ‘id.’

Proto SEB **wi(n)tiŋ* ‘satiated’ > Tanala Malagasy *vintsinjă*, Bara Malagasy *viti*, Ma’anyan *wisiŋ* ‘id.’

In these pairs, SEB languages (and Dusun Deyah) systematically exhibit *si* and Merina has *tsi* (/sĩ/), whereas South Sakalava Malagasy and various other Malagasy dialects have retained *ti*. Therefore I assume that Proto Malagasy also had **ti*.

Another development that seems diagnostic for subgrouping Malagasy with the SEB languages but actually is not because it never took place in various Malagasy regional dialects is the change from PMP **li* to *di*. In contrast to the **ti* > *tsi/si* change, this change is absent in Dusun Deyah, and it took place in only part of the Paku cognates.⁹ Consider the following instances:

Proto SEB **kali* ‘to dig’: Merina *hàdi*, South Sakalava Malagasy *hàli*, Dusun Malang, Dusun Witu, Ma’anyan, Samihim, Paku *ŋadi* (<- N- + *kadi*) ‘id.’

Proto SEB **tali* ‘rope’: South Sakalava Malagasy, northern Malagasy *tàli* ‘to plait’, Merina *tàdi*, Dusun Witu, Ma’anyan, Samihim, Paku *tadi* ‘rope’

Proto SEB **lipen* ‘tooth’: Merina *nifi*, Dusun Witu, Ma’anyan, Samihim, Paku *dipen* ‘id.’

Proto SEB **lime* ‘five’: Merina *dìmi*, South Sakalava Malagasy *lìme*, Dusun Malang, Dusun Witu, Ma’anyan, Samihim *dime* ‘id.’; compare also Paku *limo*

Proto SEB **tiliŋ* ‘to fly’: Merina *tsidină*, South Sakalava Malagasy *tìli*, Ma’anyan *sidiŋ*, Samihim *s<um>idiŋ*, DM *minsidiŋ*, Dusun Witu *samidiŋ* ‘id.’; compare also Dusun Deyah *sambiliŋ*, Pak *samiliŋ* ‘id.’

⁹ In this respect it is interesting to note that unlike Hudson (1967), Dahl (1977) and Mahdi (1988) did not classify Paku inside the SEB core group. (Note also that Paku reflects historical schwa and final **a* as ɔ, in contrast to a corresponding *ɛ* in Ma’anyan, Samihim, Dusun Malang and Dusun Witu).

Proto SEB **kulit* ‘skin’: Merina *hùditră*, South Sakalava Malagasy *hùlitse*, Ma’anyan, Samihim *kudit* ‘id.’

Proto SEB **lite* ‘sticky substance’: Merina *diti*, South Sakalava Malagasy *lìteke* (with unexplained final syllable) ‘gum, raisin’, Dusun Witu, Ma’anyan, Samihim, Paku *dite?* ‘sticky rice’.

Various other instances occur but their reflexes are limited to Malagasy dialects and Ma’anyan only. What all instances clearly demonstrate is that SEB languages in Borneo and in central, and eastern Malagasy exhibit *di*, whereas other Malagasy dialects such as South Sakalava have maintained *li*. And again, as *li* was maintained in Malagasy many regional dialects, it must also have been present in Proto Malagasy.

Although the changes from **ti* to *tsi/si* and from **li* to *di* are shared by all SEB languages in Borneo, the above phonological divergences between regional Malagasy dialects and other SEB languages show that they had not yet taken place in Proto SEB. If this contrast between Proto-Malagasy and other SEB languages already existed in Borneo, it would support the theory that the current SEB languages in Borneo had already begun to diverge from Proto Malagasy in the homeland, before the migration(s) of Proto Malagasy speakers to East Africa, and that the latter had already acquired a separate dialect. However, the argument is not hard evidence, as it is still possible that at the time of the Malagasy migration(s) in the seventh century, the **ti* > *tsi/si* and **li* > *di* changes had only just started to spread in SEB languages in Borneo, and that they took their full course in these languages only after the Malagasy migrants had left. In Madagascar the changes only systematically affected the eastern and central Malagasy dialects. Although it is likely that there was already a tendency for these changes to take place in Proto Malagasy, they had not yet fully materialized and cannot be reconstructed at that level (Adelaar 2013). In short, the current different reflexes of **ti* and **li* in SEB languages in Borneo and in Malagasy dialects add to the overall impression that Malagasy had already become a separate dialect before the migrations, although they do not provide hard evidence for it.

2.4 Person Markers in Malagasy, and the Lack of it in Ma'anyan

In the history of Malagasy there are two person markers, *ra-* and **i*.

The prefix *ra-* occurs with kinship terms, some dialectal personal pronouns, some common nouns with a human reference, and (very frequently) names. It adds a notion of respect to some of the resulting derivations. The following examples show the occurrence of *ra-* in kinship terms:

- rèni* 'mother' (< **ra-* + SEB **ine* < PMP **ina* 'mother')
- rahavàvi* 'sister (of a woman)' (< **ra-* + SEB **aka* 'older sibling' + SEB **wawey* 'woman' < PMP **aka* 'older sibling' + **babehi* 'woman')
- rahalàhi* 'brother (of a man)' (< **ra-* + SEB **aka* + **laki* 'man' < PMP **aka* + **laki* 'man')
- raivu* 'sister who is neither the youngest nor the oldest' (< **ra-* + SEB **iwo* 'halfway'; cf. Malagasy *ivo* 'middle', and Ma'anyan *iwo* 'half')
- ravinàntu* (Comorian Malagasy) 'child-in-law' (< **ra-* + SEB **winantu* < PMP **b-in-antu* 'id.')
- rafūzanā* 'parent; parent-in-law' (< **ra-* + Malay *moyaŋ*, (Malay dialects) *puyaŋ* 'ancestor(s)' (Adelaar 1992, pp. 109, 200)

Examples of *ra-* prefixed to personal pronouns in regional Malagasy forms are (Adelaar and Kikusawa 2014):

- Tandroy Malagasy *ràhu* (< *ra-* + **ahu*) '1st person sg.'
- Tandroy Malagasy *rèhe* (< *ra-* + **iha*) '2nd person sg.'
- Tandroy Malagasy *re* (< *ra-* + **iye*) '3rd person sg.'
- South Sakalava Malagasy *riè*, *ri* (< *ra-* + **iye*) '3rd person sg.'
- South Sakalava Malagasy *rahài* (< *ra-* + **ahai*) '1st person plural exclusive'

Common nouns with a human reference include the following ones:

- rafūtsi* 'term of address for old lady' (< **ra-* + *fūtsi* 'white')
- rànunā* 'what's-his-name' (< **ra-* + *ànuna* 'thing, whatchamallit')
- North Malagasy *ramatùà* 'Madam, Mrs.' (< **ra-* + *matùà* 'eldest child')

Examples of personal names with *ra-* are for instance *Radàma* (name of a Malagasy royalty in the nineteenth century) and *Razafintsalàma* (name of a Malagasy linguist).

Interestingly, this prefix is also used with European roots, as in *ramusè* ‘sir’ (< French *monsieur*), *ramulè* ‘donkey’ (< French *mulet*), *bitrũ*, *rabitrũ* ‘rabbit’ (< English), suggesting that it is still productive. It also appears in the following form containing a concatenation of personal prefixes. In it, the fossilized person marker *-z-* (see further below) is directly prefixed to the root, whereas *ra-* has a more peripheral position, showing that the latter is more productive and recent than the former:

razàndri ‘(respectful term of address for younger sibling or to any younger person)’ < (**ra-* + SEB **hi* + *àndri* ‘younger sibling’ < PMP **si* + **a(N)ji* ‘younger sibling’)

The person marker **i* is realized as *i-*, *y-*, *z-*, *iz-*, *ia-* in the various forms of Malagasy, and it is a reflex of the PMP person marker **si*. It often occurs with 1st person nominative pronouns (with which it originally formed a “topicalized” subseries (Adelaar and Kikusawa 2014)), kinship terms and some common nouns with a human reference. Examples are:

(1st person nominative pronouns:)

Proto Malagasy **i ahu* ‘1st person singular’ > Merina *zàhu*, Taisaka *ihù*, Tankarana *izàhu*

Proto Malagasy **i tikaN* ‘1st person plural inclusive’ > Merina *isika*, Taisaka *intsika*

Proto Malagasy **i ahai* ‘1st person plural exclusive’ > Merina *izahài*, Taisaka *iahài*, (sixteenth century Malagasy in Arabic script) *yahai*

(kinship terms:)

PMP **si* + (Dravidian) **appa*: ‘father’ (Adelaar 1992, p. 104, fns. 149 and 150) > Proto Malagasy **i+apε* > **yape* > Merina *zàfi* ‘child, descendant’, *àfi* ‘grandchild’¹⁰

¹⁰ The semantic change from “father” to “child” and “grandchild” is not easy to explain: maybe **apa* was originally a reciprocal kinship term used between a father and his children?

PMP **si* + **anak* ‘offspring’ > Proto Malagasy **i+anak(ă)* > **yanak* > Merina *zànakă* ‘offspring’

**si* + **ama* ‘father’ > Proto Malagasy **i+ama* > (dialectal) *zàma* ‘mother’s brother’

**si* + **a(N)ji* ‘younger sibling’ > Proto Malagasy **i+andi* > **yandri* > Merina *zàndri* ‘younger sibling’

(common noun with a human reference:)

**i(a)* + *tùvu* ‘unmarried’ > *zatùvu* ‘a youth’

**i* + (French) *(mon)sieur* ‘sir; mister’ > *isè* ‘you (used between men)’

PMP **si* is maintained in Ma’anyan as *hi*, a person marker occurring before personal names (e.g. *Hi Gayuhan*, a character in Ma’anyan folk stories). It does not occur in other positions (Adelaar personal fieldwork notes). In other SEB languages, the occurrence and role of PMP **si* reflexes is not well documented. Therefore it remains unclear whether the difference in application scope between **i* in Malagasy and *hi* in Ma’anyan is due to an expansion of the original role of **i* in Malagasy, or a reduction of the original role of *hi* in Ma’anyan. However, what is clear is that Malagasy **i* and Ma’anyan *hi* both reflect an earlier PMP **si*. In contrast, *ra-* is an innovation. It does have corresponding forms in western Indonesian languages such as Javanese and Balinese (*ra-*), Malay and Batak (fossilized *da-*) and, on first sight, even Fijian (*ra-*), but these are in all likelihood spread through borrowing or (in the case of Fijian) are an independent development. In South East Asia, *ra-* and *da-* only occur in some languages spoken in the western part of Indonesia and Malaysia, and among the SEB languages, only in Malagasy. In Malagasy (and in Balinese), *ra-* must be a loan morpheme from Javanese (Adelaar 1995b, 2010). It occurs in all Malagasy dialects, although its distribution varies according to dialect.

Given this spread, it must already have been part of Proto Malagasy. Furthermore, as the Javanese language and culture played a major role in the early history of South Borneo, and only a minor role in the post-migratory history of Madagascar, the borrowing of *ra-* from Javanese into Proto Malagasy is much more likely to have happened in South Borneo than in Madagascar.

2.5 Evaluation of the Linguistic Evidence

The linguistic evidence presented above confirms that Proto Malagasy must already have started to develop as an own entity before its speakers moved away from South Borneo and crossed the Indian ocean to settle eventually in Madagascar.

Not all of the evidence is equally decisive. The most critical piece of it is the different distribution of PMP **y* reflexes in Ma'anyan and Malagasy, because the different phonetic ingredients for this distribution were already present in the East Barito area, but not later in East Africa. Almost equally strong evidence is the presence of the originally Javanese *ra-* prefix in Malagasy. As stated above, Javanese political, cultural and linguistic influence has been a salient factor in the history of South Borneo ever since the foundation of the kingdom of Banjarmasin,¹¹ if not from before that time. It is in this very region,¹² and hence at a time well before the migration(s) of Proto Malagasy speakers to East Africa, that *ra-* must have been adopted by some speakers of SEB. Such morphological borrowing is rather unlikely to have happened after the migrations, even if Indonesia and Madagascar remained in contact. Finally, the maintenance of PMP/SEB **ti* and **li* in Proto Malagasy and the fact that the Malay consonant *s* occurs more often in Malagasy loanwords than in Ma'anyan ones support the theory that Proto Malagasy had already taken an independent course from other SEB languages before the migrations. However, they remain circumstantial evidence at best because it cannot entirely be excluded that they are the outcome of post-migratory developments.

¹¹ Nowadays, Banjarmasin (or Banjar, as it is also called) is a metropolis in South Borneo. In the past, it used to be the centre of a sultanate, and before that, of a Hindu kingdom. As explained further below, this centre changed its name and location a number of times. Unless indicated otherwise, in what follows “Banjarmasin” stands for the current metropolis as well as for its predecessors in other locations in South Borneo.

¹² It is worth noting here that the oldest Indic inscriptions in ISEA were also found in Borneo, in Muara Kaman, close to Kutai Town in East Kalimantan. They date from ca. 400 AD (Dahl 1951, p. 368). Although Muara Kaman is not in South Borneo, it is relatively close to it.

3. Malagasy as a Separate Speech Form in Borneo: The Historical Context

As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, if Malagasy was already a distinct speech form before the migrations, chances are that its speakers were in a relatively equal relationship with Malays; in contrast, if it was not yet distinct, subordination of its speakers to the Malays is more likely, all things being equal. Having a distinct speech form would suggest that they already formed their own community and had taken some distance from their traditional society, which implies a certain amount of acculturation to Malay society. If the relationship was relatively equal in terms of social hierarchy and stratification (and not, say, one of slave versus slave owner), one would understand why there are so many Malay, Javanese and Sanskrit elements in Malagasy, which include not only words, but also the Javanese honorific prefix *ra-*, an indicator of respect and social status. One would also be able to put into perspective the fact that the seventh-century Old Malay inscriptions from South Sumatra and Bangka Island (see Map 10.2) include a few lines in an unknown language that seems to represent a form of SEB (Aichele 1936; Dahl 1951, p. 158; Adelaar 1989, pp. 35–36). Yet, I am not going as far as Kullanda (2009) or Beaujard (2012), who both argue that this language is evidence for a prominent role of the Malagasy in Indonesian maritime history before they disappeared to Madagascar. Even if this unidentified language turns out to be an early form of Malagasy (which is likely), it does not justify such a far-reaching conclusion, for which there is no correlating historical and ethnographic support. A more likely scenario is that there was a symbiotic (but still asymmetric) social relation between Malays and early Malagasy people, comparable to the one that existed between the Malays and surrounding Orang Asli groups during the heydays of Malacca (fifteenth and early sixteenth century AD; see further below).

Historical information about South Borneo is scarce. Most academic research has concentrated on colonial and post-colonial times, and for the pre-colonial past we basically only have the “Banjar Chronicles” (*Hikayat Banjar* in Malay), which are the chronicles of the city of Banjarmasin. While this document is a valuable historical source, it is essentially

concerned with legitimizing the rule of the Sultanate in Banjarmasin in the sixteenth century, meaning that a true representation of historical facts is somewhat subordinated to this socio-political cause. As such, it should not be read uncritically and taken as faithfully representing historical facts. However, it should neither be rejected as a piece of fiction but interpreted as the reworking and manipulation of actual historical facts in order to meet the political ends of legitimizing a ruling dynasty. The most insightful study of the “Banjar Chronicles” along such an interpretation was published by Hans Ras (1968). He drew attention to the following points:¹³

1. Toponyms cannot be taken on face value simply because they can be used again in different areas. The Banjar Chronicles mention Tanjung Pura as an old Malay settlement, the establishment of which preceded Banjarmasin and its associated court locations (see below). It is often identified with a rather distant coastal town of the same name in West Borneo. However, in the Banjar Chronicles, Tanjung Pura seems to refer to a nearby town in South Borneo (see Map 10.1). Ras (1968, pp. 187–92) identifies it with the current town of Tanjung, a land-locked town which is situated northeast of Banjarmasin and may have lost its importance because the royal court had been shifted to places closer to the coast—most likely for economic reasons. He considers the town of Tanjung Pura in West Borneo as a more recent settlement that was given the same name as the historical Tanjung Pura in South Borneo (see Map 10.1).¹⁴
2. The coast line of South Borneo was radically different in the past and has been subject to rapid change throughout the Quaternary. Expanding coastlines in South Borneo are due to the augmentation of alluvial material brought along by the large

¹³ These are unfortunately ignored in later historical studies such as Knapen (2001).

¹⁴ This is not unlike the history of many European place names which were used again in regions where Europeans established themselves later on, as in Northern America, Africa or Australia.

rivers running through this area. Ras (1968, pp. 196–200), who was a geologist as well as a philologist, referred to Soekmono (1957) and Van Bemmelen (1949) to argue that the coast of South Borneo was originally split by a gulf. It ran almost 200 kilometres into the interior, covering an area which is currently crossed by the Barito River and several other large rivers and consists of tidal wetlands. It would have provided easy access to the sea to Tanjung, the town that had a key role in the foundation history of Banjarmasin. Obviously, recurrent and heavy siltation constituted a major problem to the then flourishing trading ports and court capitals. In order to maintain access to the sea, these settlements often had to move closer to an ever expanding coast. Court removals are a constant theme in the Banjar Chronicles, although in the story they are usually ascribed to politics and intrigue rather than to natural events. However, Ras' claim of a gulf extending almost 200 kilometres into the current interior of Borneo *in historical times* is a rather bold one and needs further verification.

3. Like toponyms, ethnonyms cannot always be taken on face value. According to the Banjar Chronicles, the Banjarese royal family descends from a *Kaling* founding father. *Kaling* is the Banjarese Malay pronunciation and orthography of the Malay word *kəliŋ*, nowadays an appellation for (South) Indians. Ras doubted that the founding family was of South Indian descent and argued that they originated from Java. This is indirectly supported by Damais (1964),¹⁵ who investigated the original meaning of *kəliŋ*. He argued that a contamination must have happened between the Indian ethnonym *Kaliŋga*, which referred to people from the Coromandel coast, and a native Indonesian term *kəliŋ* designating foreigners in general, sometimes including Javanese. Europeans must have conflated both forms, which resulted in a single term

¹⁵ For some reason this source was not used by Ras (1968).

kəliŋ designating South Indians in particular. This designation was then taken over in some Indonesian languages, eclipsing the original meaning of the word *kəliŋ* (Damais 1964, pp. 103–4). This sort of historical confusion is also observed in the use of various European ethnonyms: one recalls the original meanings of words like “Russians” (historically referring to Swedes) and “Dutch” (related to the adjective *Deutsch* with which Germans refer to themselves). So, using the Banjar Chronicles is not only a matter of retrieving historical information from a manipulated text: it also requires understanding facts that were accurate in the past but have become obscure through semantic change affecting their signifiers. This text should not be taken literally but can still be used as an invaluable source of information about things that happened in the past and are still remembered, albeit in a distorted way. It does contribute to an investigation into the origins of the Malagasy and their language. It mentions various historical facts, but as far as indications of time are concerned, we have to do with narrative time rather than chronological time. For instance, the story and genealogical list suggest a limited time span of maybe four centuries (cf. Knapen 2001), which ends with the establishment of the court in Martapura. However, it is likely that this is the result of a temporal compression, especially concerning the earliest events. The span involved was most likely much longer. The fact that the term *Kaling* refers to Javanese people, as suggested by Ras (and supported by Damais) has a direct bearing on chronology. It corresponds with a distinct period in Chinese historiography (sixth to eighth century AD) in which the Javanese were referred to as *Holing*, which is most likely a Chinese rendering of **kəliŋ*. It was apparently a period in which Buddhism (rather than Hinduism) was in the ascendant in Java. In other words, could it be that the founding fathers of Banjarmasin and its precursors were in fact Javanese (and possibly Buddhists) who moved to Borneo between the sixth and eighth century? If yes, it would correspond rather neatly with the estimated migration period of the early Malagasy. The latter probably left in the seventh century AD (Adelaar 1989): at any

rate, archeological evidence in Madagascar shows that they arrived there no earlier than 700 AD (Wright and Fanony 1992). It would also fit in with the occurrence of Buddhist inscriptions elsewhere on Borneo Island, in the Sambas region (West Kalimantan) (Griffiths 2014), and in Sanggau (West Kalimantan) and Brunei Darussalam (Machi Suhadi 1989, pp. 112–14; Sukarto K. Atmodjo 1994, pp. 1–8). Griffiths (2014, pp. 148–49) estimates the inscriptions in Sambas to be at least from the mid-ninth century AD, with an earlier date in the first half of the eighth century AD as a possibility. He considers these and other inscriptions in Java, Bali, Sumatra and Borneo, as a clear written testimony to the fact that the Indonesian archipelago was an integral part of the Buddhist world at the turn of the second millennium AD (Griffiths 2014, pp. 185–87).

The Banjar Chronicles also mention that Banjarmasin and its precursors were founded at the expense of Tanjung Pura, which was an even earlier establishment. According to Ras, Tanjung Pura was an outpost of Srivijaya, and it was more distinctly Malay than Banjarmasin. The latter became very Javanese in style, even if the Banjarese language has remained a Malay dialect. Ras' speculation that Tanjung Pura must have been located in an area upriver from Negara Dipa (the earliest precursor of Banjarmasin) rather than in West Borneo fits in with the fact that we find in Malagasy a strong influence from Malay and, to a lesser extent, from Javanese and Sanskrit. The different extent of influence that Malagasy underwent from Malay and Javanese somehow reflects a situation in which Malay was more prevalent, but Javanese was making inroads in a sociolinguistic setting in which SEB speakers and Malays were interacting. Either Malay or both Malay and Javanese must have contributed Sanskrit vocabulary to Malagasy before the Malagasy migration(s) to East Africa.

The presence of the Javanese was already apparent in the earliest period in the Banjar Chronicles, and may even predate the time span covered by this text. The Javanese were important trading partners for polities in South Borneo because of their position directly opposite of South Borneo across the Java Sea. The Banjar Chronicles suggest a

Javanese influence on politics and economic life, especially with reference to pepper production. Ras and Van Bemmelen's accounts of shifting coastlines match a situation in which the court in Negara Dipa was initially located in a region downriver from Tanjung and was subsequently moved three times to locations further downriver (to wit Amuntai, Banjarmasin and Martapura) in response to these natural events (see Map 10.1). However, as noted above, the extent of Ras' use of expanding coastlines to explain early Banjarese history is speculative and should be handled with caution awaiting further research into the geography of South Borneo.

The historical accounts of SEB peoples themselves are of limited use in search of their early history. The Ma'anyan place their original homeland in the Nan Sarunai area near Amuntai (Nan Sarunai literally stands for the mouth of the Sarunai tributary). Since Amuntai was the seat of the court before it moved to Banjarmasin and Martapura, there must have been a much closer contact between Ma'anyan and Banjarese in the past. The account of this earlier Ma'anyan homeland runs parallel to certain passages in the Banjar Chronicles referring to events in the sixteenth century AD. However, it is not clear to what extent the Ma'anyan account is coloured by "feedback" from the Banjar Chronicles.¹⁶ Furthermore, the leaving of the Nan Sarunai homeland by the Ma'anyan happened in the sixteenth to seventeenth century AD and is a fairly recent affair (Hudson 1967*b*, pp. 20, 24). It does not give us much certainty as to where they may have lived in the preceding centuries.

The identity, role and status of the ancestors of the early Malagasy migrants before they left South Borneo remains uncertain. Nevertheless, rather than war captives or forced labour they may have been a section of the SEB speakers who cooperated with local Malays and began to acculturate to them in a similar way as the Orang Asli (*Bidadari*) people once did in the Malay Peninsula. Some of the Orang Asli groups

¹⁶ For instance, Ma'anyan historical accounts sometimes include references to Madagascar and Malagasy migrations. Such references are no doubt also the result of academic feedback on traditional history.

were economically and politically in a symbiotic relationship with the local Malays. They were loyal to the ruler of Malacca, contributing to the welfare and safety of his kingdom up to the eighteenth century (Andaya and Andaya 2001, pp. 44–49, 81, 87). The Malays in Malacca were most likely also assimilating Orang Asli into their community. A similar symbiotic relationship between Malays and some of the early Malagasy people in South Borneo would explain the participation of the latter in the maritime expeditions of the former, and the likelihood that the few lines in an unknown language occurring in the oldest Malay inscriptions represent early Malagasy. In the Malay peninsula, conversion to Islam of the Malays apparently had some contrary effects on their relationship with the Orang Asli. It must have had similar effects on the relationship between Malays and SEB people in South Borneo. For the latter, abstention from pork and alcohol must have been an initial impediment to conversion, as these ingredients are essential in traditional Ma'anyan rituals.

Sellato (2013) gives a very useful insight in the various ways in which the native peoples of Borneo must have interacted in the past. He distinguishes three main types of traditional populations in Borneo in terms of social organization, economic systems, ethno-cultural identities and location relative to the coast. They are the Malays, Dayak and Punan.¹⁷ The Malays lived in Borneo's "outer ring", that is to say, in places close to the coast (although not exactly on the coast for security reasons) or at economically strategic places where rivers meet. They initially formed trading posts which would develop into local kingdoms later on. They controlled the trade between the world outside Borneo and the island's interior. Ultimately, the coastal Malay kingdoms used to be under the authority of Javanese kingdoms such as Demak. The Malays also tended to exercise control over the Dayak who lived more inland although they were not always able to do so. The Dayak usually lived more inland (the "middle ring"): they produced rice and were basically self-sufficient but were also engaged in trade with the

¹⁷ For the sake of simplicity, this term is used here in its wider application as a cover term for all traditional nomads in Borneo.

Malays, who provided them with certain luxury goods. Being more numerous than the Malays, they were potentially also more powerful, but in practice they were often divided among themselves. In some cases Dayak groups were able to form impressive political federations, controlling large territories, subordinating other groups and even making slaves, but they never developed these federations into kingdoms. Some Dayak groups underwent strong influence from the more cosmopolitan Malays, who were under Indian cultural influence and would eventually adopt Islam. Dayak traders operated as middlemen between the Punan and the Malays. The Punan are nomads who live even further into the interior (the “inner ring”) and traditionally collect forest products. Via the Dayak and Malays these products would find their way to the world outside Borneo.

According to Sellato, in the remote interior Dayak and Punan groups were independent and paid no tribute. In the middle courses of main rivers, strong Dayak societies developed political bonds with Malay kings and became their vassals. In lower river regions, some Dayak groups participated in the formation of coastal kingdoms. Some other groups in these regions would end up under the kingdom’s control and their territories became part of the kingdom’s land: they became *sarah*, which Sellato translates as “dependent”; however, the word also carries the notion of surrendering and most likely refers to tributaries. The term is Malay: Banjar Malay has a dialectal form *sarah* (same meaning), which was also adopted with the same form and meaning into Ma’anyan. Malagasy has a corresponding term *sàra* “payment; cost, price”, referring to the tribute to be paid as a consequence of dependency or surrendering rather than the state of dependency or surrendering itself. People who had given in to the kingdom’s control in this way would gradually assimilate to Malays (and eventually embrace Islam).

Sellato’s model of a Dayak/Malay interface, especially in the middle courses of main rivers, provides a very good setting for the Malagasy homeland. It also provides a scenario that is more convincing than one involving a master-slave relationship. Early Malagasy society may have contributed more actively to the formation of the Banjarese kingdom, and part of it (that is, the part that did not migrate to east Africa) may also have surrendered to it and eventually merged with

it at some stage. In this context it is worth noting that recent genetic tests based on autosomal DNA have shown that the Malagasy are genetically closer to the population of Banjarmasin than to the Ma'anyan (Brucato et al. 2016).

4. Concluding Remarks

For want of historical records and archaeological data, the linguistic and literary history of Malagasy and the traditional Malay literature of South Borneo are invaluable sources for a better understanding of early relations between India and South Borneo. They help us to understand some of the circumstances under which the early Malagasy left their native land and sailed all the way across the Indian Ocean to East Africa. They give us a glimpse of the level of Indic influence via (Buddhist) Śrīvijaya and (Buddhist and Hindu) Javanese courts on the civilization and intellectual development of Indonesia in the seventh century AD. They also give a glimpse of the impact that Indic religious and political ideologies used to have on governments in ISEA. Indic concepts of power and a related administrative terminology were introduced to the Malays and Javanese in the early centuries of the Common Era; some of this heritage was passed on to the early Malagasy and even survived in the Merina kingdom in the nineteenth century AD (Ottino 1983; Beaujard 2012).

There are various early developments that set off Malagasy against other SEB languages, leaving a strong impression that Malagasy had already become a separate dialect before its speakers migrated to East Africa in the seventh century and implying that there already was a separate Malagasy speech community in Borneo. Especially indicative of this early separate development are the reflexes of Proto Malayo-Polynesian **ɣ* and the acquisition of a polite person prefix *ra-*. Proto Malayo-Polynesian **ɣ* has two reflexes in all SEB languages, but the distribution of each of these reflexes in Malagasy is different from that in other SEB languages. The Javanese respect marker *ra-* was adopted into Malagasy but is absent in other SEB languages.

SEB languages have been exposed to Malay and Javanese for far much longer than Malagasy. The exposure of the latter to influences

from other Indonesian languages became rather limited after its speakers had migrated to East Africa. Considering the geographical constraint imposed on this event, the Malagasy language and culture still exhibit a remarkably high level of Malay and Javanese influence, including some vocabulary and cultural elements that are ultimately of Indic provenance. This influence is explained best by a symbiotic model of co-existence between the early Malagasy and Malays living in their direct vicinity before the migration(s) to East Africa. These early Malagasy were probably already much further on the way to assimilation to Malay language and culture than other SEB societies. This model explains more than a scenario involving the participation of early Malagasy as forced labour, and it also fits in better with the general traditional patterns of ethnic co-existence and cultural assimilation in Borneo and elsewhere in Indonesia.

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11

ŚĀSTRIC AND AUSTRONESIAN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES Parallel Frameworks on Indic Architectural and Cultural Translations among Western Malayo-Polynesian Societies

Imran bin Tajudeen

1. Cultural Transfer in Early Historical Maritime Asia

A number of recent articles have rekindled the debate on agency in the production of Southeast Asia's Indic religious monuments by suggesting, on the basis of specific readings of architecture, that an initial period of Indian involvement must have occurred. Roy E. Jordaan (2006) argues for a dichotomous periodization: that a "foreign, Indian" Central Javanese Mahāyāna Buddhist period preceded a more indigenous East Javanese period. To bolster this claim that Indian agency and tutelage was necessary in eighth-century south Central Java, Jordaan quotes the opinions of Willem F. Stutterheim (1925) and Horace G. Quaritch Wales

(1961) that Central and East Javanese art represents, respectively, “Hindu art in Java” and “Hindu-Javanese art”.

Michel Jacq-Hergoualc’h (2002, p. 229) has meanwhile opined that the temples of Kedah were the work of “foreign merchants” who were allowed to build there—a surmise based on an overview of extant masonry remains. Like Jordaan, Jacq-Hergoualc’h’s claim rests on a reading of masonry remains that has excluded their larger physical setting and the epigraphic evidence connected with their construction or sociocultural milieu.

This chapter re-evaluates the architectural and art historical evidence from early extant monuments in Central Java, Sumatra and Kedah and their architectural innovation and literary references with a focus on highlighting two aspects. First, architectural or iconographic innovations in the early Indic monuments whose significance can be connected to original syntheses expressed in epigraphic or literary sources have been overlooked in the above claims. Second, the syntheses between Indic and Austronesian form typology occurred not only in masonry structures but in aspects of built form that extend well beyond these and involved not just architectural form but conceptual and literary integration and innovation. In some cases, the sources make it clear that literate Western Malayo-Polynesian (WMP) cultures were consciously refashioning Indic ideas, sometimes through their synthesis with autochthonous conceptions; where concepts of Indian origin were expressed in architectural or iconographic schema these translations into form often had no precedence in India and even occurred earlier than the *śāstric* canonization of the Indic ideas concerned. In this re-evaluation, F.D.K. Bosch’s *śāstric* thesis—that Indic classical features on Javanese candi and religious art were the outcome of the periodic renewal of *śāstric* references by the Javanese—and Hermann Kulke’s (1990, 2014) concept of “cultural convergence”—which emphasizes the contemporaneity of developments in South India and Southeast Asia, and their “social nearness” in terms of similarities or parallels in their social and political developments and needs—are extended to take into account Java’s position within not only the Indic religious-literary world, but also, simultaneously, in an Austronesian architectural typological continuum.

2. Indian Intervention before “Indigenization”? Stratigraphic and Chronological Assumptions

Jordaan (1999, pp. 227–28) has claimed that a number of Central Javanese monuments are transplanted edifices, the outcome of a putatively foreign Śailendra dynasty, whose members “ushered in a new phase in Javanese cultural history, which for the sake of convenience [he terms] the Mahāyāna Buddhist period”. He reasons that a foreign, Indian phase was necessary before a two-way exchange between India and Indic Southeast Asia could commence:

This ‘cultural convergence’ (Kulke) and ‘two way cultural exchange’ seems to me inconceivable without the Śailendras, however, who can be regarded as its pioneers and props, in short, as cultural brokers of this more thoroughgoing Indianization process.

There are several problems with Jordaan’s claims,¹ and this discussion will focus on the fact that it assumes a separation between the indigenous and the Indic, and their juxtaposition as distinct elements accessible to what Craig Reynolds (1995) has termed “stratigraphic” scrutiny. This stratigraphic model is not just a synchronic frame but also assumes a teleological schema from a pre-Indian to an Indian phase, followed by localization. Jordaan aligns himself with Quaritch Wales (1961, p. 14) who speaks of “the principle of cultural resurgence”, wherein indigenous elements are said to have been “suppressed” by an

¹ Jordaan (1999) overstated the case in his list of “exogenous changes”, derived mainly from Majumdar (1934, p. 15), that are said to mark the appearance of the purportedly foreign Śailendras in Central Java and their “departure”, in an attempt to demonstrate a definite break between the Central and East Javanese periods of architecture and art and to emphasize the purported foreign design of the Mahāyāna Buddhist monuments of Central Java. He passes over in silence the pre-Śailendra Javanese temples at Dieng and Gedong Songo, which were original in their conception and possessed both formal and iconographic innovations and bear an imprint upon Śailendra-era Central Javanese structures, particularly in their early phases before subsequent modifications (Dumarçay 1986, p. 29). Jordaan also claims that “the impact of the Śailendras’ departure was so great as to be a major factor in the art-historical break that can be discerned in the temple art of Java”—this is an overstatement that has been challenged by Zakharov (2012).

Indian overlay that shaped the Indic “states”, to re-emerge or resurface later. In art historical scholarship on Indic Southeast Asia, such notions are slowly being revised—Robert Brown (1996, p. 185) has pointed out, for instance, that based on the analysis of the distinct *dharmacakra* motif in Mon Dvāravatī art,

Seeing Indianization as the product of two constants does not consider that Indianization/localization is a process... [the outcomes] are neither Indian nor pre-Indian, but products of a specific culture and period that transforms constantly. In this light, ‘indigenous’ is problematical, as it assumes that indigenous culture ceased developing with the arrival of Indian culture.

Further, Jordaan’s statements also restate Quaritch Wales’ (1961, p. 13) assumption that there is a wide gulf between the societies of South Asia and Southeast Asia, expressed through the claim that “acculturation” on a “mutual basis” between “Aryan” and local culture could only occur in South India, where it led to “fusion, synthesis”, or “hybridization”, but not in “Greater India” (the term by which Indic Southeast Asia was formerly designated), where we are instead “always concerned there with some stage either in Indianization, or in the resurgence of the pre-Indian civilizations”. Jordaan is thus dismissive of Kulke’s (1990) “cultural convergence” theory which sees parallels rather than contrasts between the societies on the two sides of the Bay of Bengal. Kulke (1986, p. 2) was also against the “transplantation theory” which assumes that Indian concepts of state and statecraft have been simply “‘transplanted’ to the virgin soil of Southeast Asia”. In contrast, Jordaan (1999, p. 236) even goes as far as to opine that “foreign artists” must have been “invited for and subsequently supervising the construction of some of the ‘classical’-looking East Javanese works of art”. Jordaan flatly dismisses Bosch’s (1920, p. 167) aforementioned *śāstric* thesis, which would stand in the way of these claims.

The evidence from Southeast Asian Indic cultural forms and expression in architecture and literature indicate the following points that are reviewed in the ensuing sections. First, there is compelling evidence

of highly original interpretations and extensions of *śāstric* material from the earliest examples, which are expressed in both literary and architectural expression, which may be cited in support of Bosch's *śāstric* thesis and point to a widespread literate culture beyond *śāstric* circles—and in literary culture these involved both Sanskrit and WMP vernacular languages, namely Old Malay, Old Javanese, and Old Cam. Second, early Southeast Asian Indic art shows autonomy from Indian examples and in several instances actually pioneered a number of unprecedented extensions of *śāstric* sources and their translation into architecture and iconographic schema—these cases bear out Kulke's perspective on the simultaneity of Sanskrit cultural adoptions in South and Southeast Asia. Third, the syncretic integration between, and translation of, Indic sources and Austronesian forms and concepts are already observable early in the Central Javanese period, while the differences between Central and East Javanese architecture have also been overstated, ignoring the considerable continuities between them. Fourth, the Austronesian–Indic integration extended to Java's vernacular architecture, and moreover Javanese vernacular typological developments during the so-called Central and East Javanese periods have immense significance within an Austronesian, rather than Indic, comparative architectural perspective.

2.1 Examples that Pre-date Indian Developments or Śāstric Canonization

Bosch's (1920) *śāstric* thesis, rejected outright by Jordaan, posits that Javanese Indic religious monuments were the outcome of the study and transmission of Indic architectural treatises (*Śilpaśāstra*) by Indonesian "clerics". Bosch's thesis requires modification, as the *śāstric* element in Javanese and WMP agency involved not just the consultation of *Śilpaśāstra*. The *śāstric* references in Borobudur, Prambanan, and the very term *caṇḍi* point firstly to a sophisticated engagement with a variety of literary materials by the Javanese, but more importantly to their having pioneered the translation of concepts from various religious sources into architecture or sculpture before such translations occurred in India. More astonishingly, these developments appear to precede the earliest known

canonical consolidation of the relevant *śāstra* in India. In addition, a number of texts and inscriptions in Sanskrit and WMP languages from the early first millennium AD—before the “Śailendra era” of Java—point to a possibly widespread general literacy extending beyond court scribes and priestly circles, and beyond Sanskrit to Old Malay, Old Cam, Old Javanese and even Old Ma’anyan.

We look briefly at six cases of *śāstric* engagement and architectural, art or iconographic innovations. First, the Javanese term used to refer to Indic temples, *caṇḍi*, suggests early Javanese engagement with and reworking of *śāstric* sources. Its first known use is found in the Ngabean Inscription of AD 882 in the hybrid form “*pacaṇḍdyan*” (Soekmono 1995, p. 68) bearing Javanese affixes, and Mark Long (2009, p. 90) connects it to the term *caṇḍita* which is used in the Buddhist *śilpa* text *Mañjuśrīvāstuvidyāśāstra* in place of the generic term *vāstupuruṣa-maṇḍala* used in Śaiva Saiddhāntika texts such as the *Mānasāra* and the *Mayamatam* for temple layouts or “cosmograms”—specifically, “The *Mañjuśrīvāstuvidyāśāstra* presents *caṇḍita* as its all-embracing term for referring to temples of varying size and plan”.

Astonishingly these *śilpa* texts, whether Śaiva Saiddhāntika or Buddhist, date no earlier than the early ninth century—this is at least a century later than the earliest known Javanese *caṇḍi*. These examples, where architectural translation of *śāstric* prescriptions in Java appear to predate the earliest known texts, serve to remind us of Kulke’s (1990) convergence hypothesis—namely, that independent invention characterized the developments in South and Southeast Asia despite the shared bases. And as Julie Romain (2011, p. 314) has concluded, the earliest Javanese *caṇḍi* at Dieng appeared simultaneously with the earliest free-standing temples in South Asia, and were already “uniquely Javanese in style”.

Long (2009, p. 89) opines that the link to the term *caṇḍita* betrays a Sri Lankan connection, since the Abhayagiri monastery is referred to in an inscription found at the Ratu Boko site, and further since the *Mañjuśrīvāstuvidyāśāstra* was written in a Sinhalese script. However, this link merely strengthens Bosch’s *śāstric* thesis since the connection to Sri Lanka is textual rather than architectural—the Javanese *caṇḍi* in

both typological and iconographic terms (Dumarcay 1986, p. 16) were unique from its earliest period. They bear little correlation to Sri Lankan examples of the *caitya grha* or core sanctuary.

Second, Borobudur presents an enigma concerning its pioneering translation of Mahāyāna and Esoteric Buddhist *śāstric* sources into its narrative reliefs and iconography. The *Deśavarṇana* (also known as *Nāgarakṛtāgama*), as Bosch (1920) points out, lists Borobudur among the Esoteric Buddhist “Vajradhara shrines” or *kabajradharan*—but J.E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw (1965, p. 416) notes that the Vajradhara (i.e. Vajrayāna) system seems to have been canonized only around the tenth century, leaving us with the astonishing fact that Borobudur translated a system of Esoteric Buddhism into its iconography before its known *śāstric* canonization:

The possibility, therefore, exists that the Buddhist system of Barabudur presents a very early phase in the development of the Vajradhara, Vajrācārya or Yogācārya [sic] sect of Mahāyāna Buddhism, a phase of which little or no material evidence has been preserved elsewhere in the Buddhist world.

Similarly, Max Nihom (1994, p. 189) has—more correctly—argued that Esoteric Buddhist data preserved on Java and Sumatra reflect a doctrinal situation preceding eighth-century systematizations, and therefore “may greatly aid us in attempting to reconstruct the intellectual history of the Tantras in India itself”.

The third and fourth examples point to the translation of Vajrayāna Buddhist precepts into built forms before the tenth century, this time in Sumatra. Śrīvijaya’s Old Malay Talang Tuwo inscription of AD 684 is significant in attesting to the even earlier existence of an early form of Vajrayāna Buddhism in southeast Sumatra (Coedès and Damais 1992, pp. 60–61), which was becoming popular in Nālandā monastery in Bengal then (Yijing’s testimony of 671 only noted Hīnayāna Buddhism). The inscription records a “park” bearing the Sanskrit name Śrīkṣetra dedicated by the ruler of Śrīvijaya as a sign of his compassion as a Bodhisattva; significantly the term used for “park” in the inscription is the Old Malay term *parlak*, no longer used in Malay but still found

in modern Batak (Coedès and Damais 1992; Kulke 1993). Meanwhile, Hariani Santiko (2006, pp. 378–79) has observed that Candi Gumpung at Muara Jambi is a Vajrayāna temple and quotes Soekmono's (1987) reconstruction that it is a terraced platform with an open pavilion at its summit during its second phase of enlargement in the eleventh to twelfth centuries, while in its initial phase from the ninth century it most likely contained *stūpikās*—remains of which can be found in ruins surrounding the *caṇḍi*—arranged in a concentric pattern to the Vajradhatu-maṇḍala as signalled by the names of the requisite five Jina-Buddhas deities inscribed in the deposit-boxes.

The fifth example is the relief panels on Prambanan containing the sculptural depiction of Indian dance movements known as *karaṇa*. Alessandra Iyer (1995, p. 398) has noted, however, that these are “not copies of Indian material”, for “they are about 200 years older than the first known *karaṇa* series, at the Bṛhadiśvara temple in Tanjore, South India”. Iyer (1995, p. 398) then makes the following observation:

It is likely that the Coḷa King Rājārāja may have been inspired to have a *karaṇa* sequence in his temple after learning about Prambanan. [...] The figures [in Prambanan] are too accurate, from a technical viewpoint, to have been carved without a knowledge of a living dance tradition based on the principles of body manipulation known from the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.

Further, Iyer (1995, p. 399) responds to claims “that the carvers [in Prambanan] may have been foreign or imitating samples of a foreign sculptural tradition”, by reminding us that

our data show very clearly that there were no prototypes or ‘samples’ for the *karaṇa* of Prambanan and thus the images were an entirely local creative endeavour. This is very important because it shows that Southeast Asian Hindus did not depend on Indian input, but had knowledge of the *śāstra(s)* to draw upon.

Finally, it should also be noted that Prambanan's reliefs portray certain episodes from the *Ramāyāṇa* before they appear in either the Indian or Indonesian literary traditions, which likely points to the existence

of an “alternate oral tradition” (Saran 2007, p. 365). Here we are confronted with the possibility that “literacy” in *śāstric* references may have assumed theatrical or even oral literary dimensions in addition to, and preceding, sculptural or architectural expression.

3. Revisiting Bosch’s *Śāstric* Thesis—WMP Agency in Literate Culture

There is in fact evidence that the literary developments and associated chronology in Southeast Asia, particularly among its Malayo-Polynesian language speakers, depart considerably from Sheldon Pollock’s (2006) framework of an earlier phase of Sanskrit Cosmopolitanism followed by that of the “cosmopolitan vernacular”. One may cite Śrīvijaya’s seventh-century Old Malay inscriptions that already used Sanskrit in its own adapted, peculiar ways (de Casparis 1956, pp. 16–19) and the “extraordinary efflorescence of courtly texts” in Old Javanese that astounded Pollock (2006, p. 389) and elicited the following remarks from him in connection with the Old Javanese *Ramāyāṇa kakawin*:

It is indicative of the narrative and aesthetic independence of vernacularisation in Java that the final 44 percent of the text, according to one careful estimate, corresponds to nothing in the *Bhaṭṭikāvya* [on which it is based].

Pollock (2006, pp. 387–88) turns to literature in Old Javanese in general with the remark that “Java has special claim on our attention, given the dramatic example it provides”, because Java’s earliest Old Javanese text

fully evinces the cosmopolitan-vernacular style – but not only style... when Javanese seized the place of Sanskrit in the domain of royal inscription, vernacular poets began to produce a grand new literature...

Pollock’s astonishment with the Old Javanese evidence is not unfounded and parallels the surprise expressed by James Fergusson in his discussion of Javanese Indic architecture to be reviewed later. Further, the Old Javanese *Ramāyāṇa kakawin* presents a number of surprises not detailed by Pollock.

To begin with, Supomo (1995, p. 322) has pointed out that “the choice of Bhaṭṭi’s poem, rather than Vālmīki’s epic, to serve as the poet’s model in writing [the Old Javanese *Ramāyāṇa kakawin*], is remarkable”, given that the poem is written in more difficult Sanskrit and was less well-known, and adduces that this choice illustrates the high level of scholarship then prevailing in Java. The allegorical Sargas of the Old Javanese *Ramāyāṇa* also provide a satirical account of contemporary events in Java involving individuals understood as belonging to the Śailendras and the Sañjaya line of kings—Stuart Robson (1983, p. 302) and Andrea Acri (2010) have both discussed this fascinating feature after Aichele’s (1969) work that compares these Sargas with ninth-century Javanese inscriptions.

More importantly, however, the text also provides a tantalizing clue of a robust literate culture in Old Javanese beyond the courtly *kakawin* genre—another point that escapes Pollock’s scope of analysis. Van der Molen (2003, p. 339) explains that “One of the differences [between the Old Javanese and Sanskrit *Ramāyāṇa*] is that the Old Javanese Sita writes a letter, whereas the Indian Sita of the *Bhaṭṭikāvya* limits herself to sending an object”. This curious innovation to the story suggests the prevalence of a literate culture among WMP societies in the form of letter-writing and other ephemera. This anecdote can also be compared with Spanish accounts of lively writing traditions in various so-called *baybayin* scripts in the sixteenth-century Philippines (Scott 1997), as well as de Casparis’ (1956, p. 73) reference to the prevalence of literacy among the Mangyans of Mindoro as support for the possibility “that scripts in parts of ancient maritime South East Asia was by no means limited to clerks and monks”, and with the ubiquity of religious literacy within Balinese society beyond priestly or court circles along with its thorough integration into indigenous (or indigenized) notions of magic (Rubinstein 2000). This socio-literary context might be expected to have allowed for the sophisticated literary and doctrinal references that supported the astonishing innovations so evident in ninth-century Central Javanese temples’ narrative sculpture, original iconographies and architectural forms.

There are also several seventh- and eighth-century notices in Chinese records of Buddhist texts that were written in Old Malay, meaning that the “vernacular cosmopolitanism” phase among WMP speakers detracts from the chronology offered by Pollock.² In addition, inscriptions in both Sanskrit and WMP languages that are older than the Old Javanese *Ramāyāṇa* bear clues that further indicate the agency of WMP societies in processes of conceptual translation and synthesis. A number of scholars have noted that the earliest inscriptions, whether in Sanskrit or in WMP languages, were already written using scripts that showed considerable independence from Indian prototypes.³ Sanskrit words or terms were also employed or modified in ways that are unexpected and have no Indian precedent.⁴ De Casparis (1975, p. 17, fn. 7) even proffers that “there are indications that Buddhist Sanskrit texts might have been an important source from which words were incorporated in Indonesian languages”—such an observation lends further support to Bosch’s *śāstric* thesis. Javanese word chronograms, meanwhile, indicate one ubiquitous form of sophisticated literary innovation upon Indic material that began with the earliest Old Javanese inscriptions (Noorduyn 1993).

² This body of evidence is reviewed in the penultimate section of this chapter, on Old Malay.

³ See de Casparis (1956, pp. 1, 16–19) on how Śrīvijayan inscriptions showed standardized modifications of the “Pallava” script for writing Old Malay—we note also that more recently Griffiths (2014, p. 54) has gone further to argue that the script used in Śrīvijayan inscriptions should be more properly termed “Late Southern Brāhmī” rather than “Pallava” since the former “developed in separate directions in various regions”, including seventh-century southeastern Sumatra. Pierre Baptiste (2014, p. 69) observes that the Nāgarī script used on the fourth-century Vo Canh stele “had already evolved from its Indian predecessors”.

⁴ De Casparis (1956, pp. 16–19) also notes that Sanskrit words were used in ways that are odd, or which present a slight variation in meaning from the classical usage, or combined in unusual ways, all of which indicate their assimilation into Old Malay at an earlier period. Kulke (1993) meanwhile notes that the Old Malay inscriptions of Śrīvijaya coined a number of new unconventional Sanskrit-derived terms relating to bureaucratic functionaries as well as the structure of the capital and surrounding realm.

4. Autochthonous–Indic Syncretism in Architecture and Ornament

Returning to our focus on architecture and art, we may observe the integration between Indic and indigenous concepts and forms in the temples of Central Java, Sumatra, and Kedah between the eighth and eleventh centuries, wherein Sanskrit or Indic ideas or forms have been applied or extended innovatively in ways that have no precedent in India. Jordaan's assumption on the Indian character of the buildings of Java's "Mahāyāna Buddhist period" ignores the syncretic integration of Indic and Austronesian forms and concepts and the fundamental typological hybridity already found in Central Javanese Indic architecture. These aspects suggest an independent reworking of Indic and indigenous material from the earliest period through their integration and mutual translation at both the formal and conceptual levels, rather than the kind of initial Indian intervention Jordaan has imagined. The Old Javanese *sīma* grants also remind us that, beneath a Sanskrit term used to refer to an institution whose concept is Indian in origin, temple construction in Java rests entirely upon a complex indigenous system. The production of Indic religious sanctuaries were enmeshed with Javanese structures of authority, socio-spatial organization, and mechanisms of economic redistribution that are revealed through these *sīma* grants (Wisseman-Christie 1999).

James Fergusson (1972 [1876], p. 414), in his two-volume *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*—the first text to locate Java in a larger Asian architectural context—expressed his great astonishment with the enigmas presented by Java's Indic architecture. He started his chapter on Java with the following remarks:

There is no chapter in the whole history of Eastern art so full of apparent anomalies, or which so completely upsets our preconceived ideas of things as they ought to be, as that which treats of the architectural history of the island of Java.

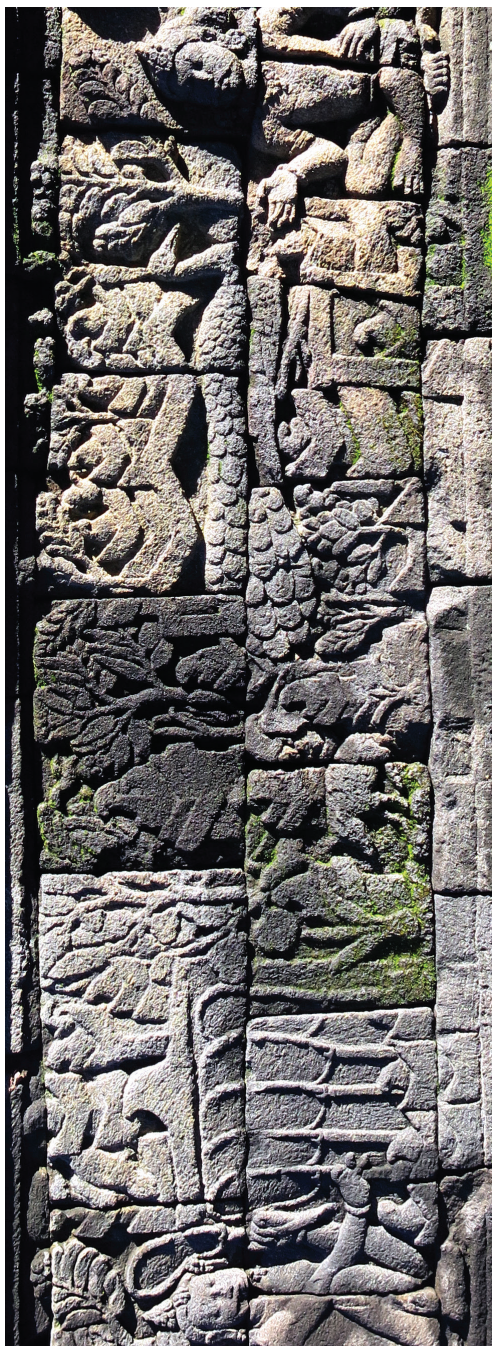
I have discussed the context of his observations in greater detail in a previous article where I emphasize the need to locate Javanese Indic and

Islamic architecture within not only an Asian comparative framework (with South and West Asia) but also an Austronesian comparative perspective (Imran 2013). Fergusson's words deserve our special attention, as he discusses Java last, after a detailed survey of the Indic monuments of the rest of Southeast Asia and in India.

Fergusson refers particularly to Borobudur's and Mendut's form and ornament in his discussion. Certainly Borobudur extends and reworks Indic art in ways never seen in India.⁵ In fact, the reworking of Indic cosmography began earlier in Java—the pre-Śailendra eighth-century Śaiva temples at Dieng already presented a unique Javanese iconographic format that remained constant into the thirteenth century (Dumarçay 1986, p. 16), along with the ubiquitous *kāla-makara* combination motif, also already present in the Gedung Songo temples, that is a unique and unprecedented extension of the *kīrtimukha* ornament—Parul Pandya Dhar's (2007, pp. 276–77) detailed study of Central Javanese examples concludes that the Javanese *kāla-makara-toraṇa* motifs, “though affiliated to Indian counterparts, signifies several complex layers of cultural consciousness that suggest newer shades of meaning and resultant formalistic manifestations” and for which “there is not even a single equivalent... in the entire realm of Indian art”. The narrative reliefs on “Śailendra-era” *caṇḍis*, whether Hindu or Mahāyāna, also depict animals and animal tales, local narratives and original figurative conventions (Totton 2003) as well as the enigmatic “curious ‘terraced towers’” motif that appears to refer to an independent sculptural or architectural feature found in Javanese gardens (Lombard 2010, pp. 47–51) (see Figure 11.1).

⁵ The particular articulation of the wishing trees motif on Borobudur and Mendut, the overall conception of Borobudur's narrative reliefs, their particular local content, ornamental motifs and arrangement, and the perforated stupas containing life-sized Buddha statues, while all obviously based on Indian art and architecture, have been combined and re-invented in ways that are entirely unprecedented.

FIGURE 11.1



Enigmatic “Terraced Towers” Motif, Here Repeated Twenty-two Times, That Possibly Refers to an Independent Sculptural or Architectural Feature Found in Javanese Gardens (Lombard 2010, pp. 47–51), Borobudur, Central Java, Ninth Century

Source: Author.

5. The *Pundèn* Terraced Mound and *Śāstric* Integration in the *Kamūlān* and *Kahyarian*

The significance of Borobudur, apparently the most grandiose Buddhist edifice constructed by the Śailendra, extends well beyond its ornamental aspects. Like Prambanan and Sambisari, two Central Javanese Hindu structures, Borobudur is characterized by typological and conceptual hybridity incorporating a concentric *pundèn* or terraced ancestral mound. A full reading of Borobudur and Prambanan in particular cannot be based on Indic conceptual or ritual bases alone, but this is not simply because they have been hybridized with Austronesian forms. Their Indic *śāstric* references are not mere applications of Indian precedents whether from an architectural or conceptual point of view.

Consistent with a conscious *śāstric* engagement, Borobudur's unique terraced form, where a *stūpa* and *maṇḍala* is translated into, and integrated with, the *pundèn* mound, is signalled unequivocally in Javanese inscriptions in two ways. First, the term *sugata*, the “ten-fold Buddha”, is employed in place of the common term *bodhisattva* (Miksic 2003a, p. 30; de Casparis 1950, p. 147). Meanwhile, besides the hybrid Sanskrit-Javanese term *kabajradharan* used for Borobudur as mentioned earlier, another hybrid term *kamūlān* also appears in a ninth-century inscription linked to it. De Casparis (1981, pp. 66–67) has connected the present-day folk name Borobudur to the compound term *Bhūmisambhāra* found in two inscriptions dated 824 and 842 CE, with the additional term *bhūdhara* denoting mountain. He notes:

The inscription of 842 applies to *Bhūmisambhāra* not any of the well-known terms used by modern scholars to describe Barabudur—*stūpa*, *stūpa-prāsāda*, or *maṇḍala*—but *kamūlān*... *kamūlān* indicates the original center of the kingdom.

As a “place of origin”, *kamūlān* Borobudur's stepped profile assumes the form of the Austronesian ancestral mound (see Figure 11.2). In Javanese this terraced mound is called the *pundèn* and belongs with similar monumental terraced mounds found in the Yap and Caroline Islands in the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau and the Marianas (Morgan 1988) as well as in Polynesia from Tahiti and the Marquesas to Hawaii and Tonga (Crouch and Johnson 2001; Stokes 1991). And in light of the

FIGURE 11.2



Kamūlān Borobudur's Stepped Profile Assumes the Form of the Austronesian Ancestral Mound which in Javanese is Called the *Pundèn*, Central Java, Ninth Century

Source: Author.

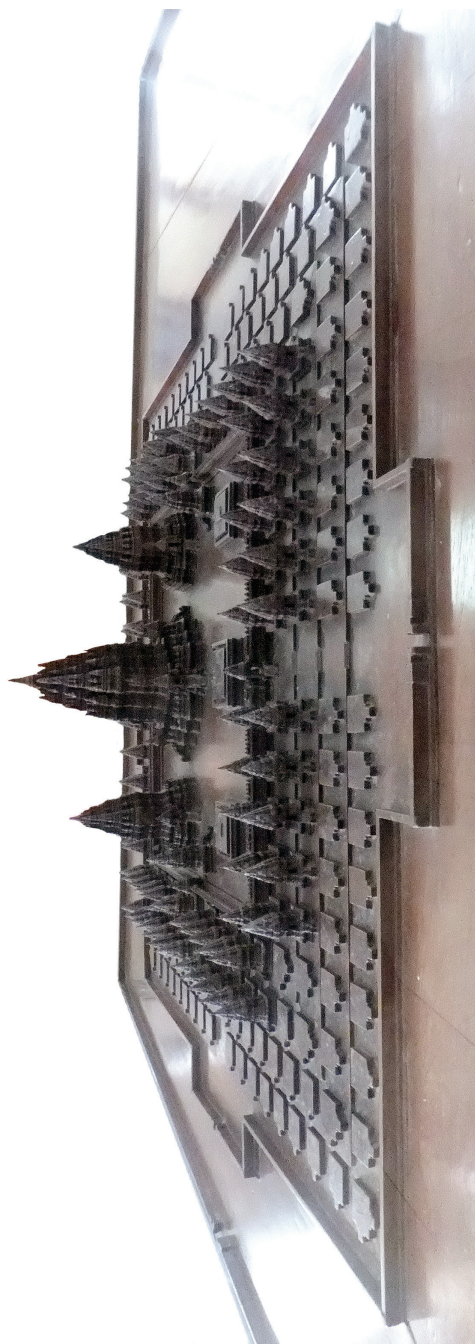
Javanese usage of the term *sugata* or “ten-fold Buddha” noted earlier, the ten terraces of *kamūlān* Borobudur becomes highly significant. It provides the key clue on both the typological basis and symbolic meaning of the unique ten-terraced form of this Mahāyāna monument.

Simultaneously, Borobudur is also a hybrid *maṇḍala* configuration. The components of this hybrid *maṇḍala* are orchestrated through their position on different levels of a *pundhèn*. In the niches above the first three galleries, the five Jina-Buddhas display different *mudrās* according to their orientation; in contrast, identical Buddhas face all four directions in the niches above the fourth gallery and in the latticed *stūpas* of the circular terrace, corresponding in this case to the multiplication of identical Buddha figures described in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* which narrates events immediately following the Buddha’s enlightenment (Fontein 2013, p. 7). The translation of texts and doctrinal schema in this manner is novel.

Besides Borobudur, there are further clues that other “Śailendra-era” Central Javanese temples express autochthonous concepts of ancestor veneration expected of a *kamūlān* “place of origin” or a *pundèn* “terraced ancestral mound”. Jordaan and Wessing (1996, p. 69), quoting earlier observations by de Casparis (1956) and Bosch (1954), remark that evidence from Prambanan and other Javanese Indic monuments provide “a strong confirmation of the hypothesis of a syncretic adaptation of the Indic cult of royalty to indigenous Javanese ancestral beliefs”.

Indeed, the whole Prambanan complex is built as a series of rising stepped terraces—a fact that usually goes unmentioned, and which shall be discussed further later (see Figure 11.3). But the full significance of Prambanan’s uniqueness only emerges with a combined religio-political reading of both layout and iconography. The evidence from associated inscriptions indicate that the complex not only presents the unprecedented combination of the Trimūrti in a single, integrated plan with Śaivism occupying the centre, but bears an original synthesis of known Indic iconography and is simultaneously the indigenous ancestral shrine for the monarch. Aciri and Jordaan (2012) have proposed, on the basis of art historical and scriptural sources, that the twenty-four directional deities depicted on Candi Siva in Prambanan

FIGURE 11.3



Model of the Prambanan Hindu Temple Complex, Central Java, Ninth Century, Referred to in an Inscription from 856 as Both a *Parhyāṇan* or Sanctuary to the Indigenous Ancestral Cult, and a Śivagr̥ha or Śivālaya. Built as a Series of Rising Stepped Terraces Recalling the *Pundēn* Ancestral Mound, Including the Four Terraces of the Array of *Perwara* Temples within the Second Enclosure; in the Prambanan Archaeological Park International Visitors Centre

Source: Author.

merge an established series of eight Brahmanic Lokapālas with another series of sixteen Śaiva Digbandhas—a unique pantheon attested to in Old Javanese sources. Besides this merging of Brahmanic and Śaiva iconography, Soekmono (1995, p. 65) has also referred to the Śivagrha Inscription of 856, associated with the Prambanan complex, which states that this temple complex or *dharma* built by Rakai Pikatan is also called a *parhyānan*, which denotes a sanctuary to the indigenous cult of ancestors or *hyañ*, even as it simultaneously bears the name Śivagrha or Śivālaya, while the central image is referred to in the inscription twice as *bhaṭāra*, “which can apply to a deified deceased king”. De Casparis and Mabbett (1992, p. 288) have emphasized that Brahmanism is more correctly understood as comprising “priests [who] stood for a social order” by enhancing a royal cult and is “distinct from the specific cults of Śiva or Viṣṇu”. In a similar vein, Supomo (1972) has pointed to the importance expressed in several fourteenth-century *kakawins* of the belief in a Mountain God or “Lord of the Mountains” tied to the Javanese monarch; he characterizes this as a “national creed” that stood above Buddhism and Śaivism, and allowed for the celebrated expression of the “unity within diversity” (*bhinneka tuṅgal ika*) of Śiva-Buddha expressed by Mpu Tantular in *Sutasoma* and also *Arjunawijaya*.

Similarly, a little later Pu Siṇḍok, whose reign (c. 929–47) witnessed the shift of Java’s paramount polity from Central to East Java, was recorded to have restored old ancestral sites termed *kamūlān* and *kahyañan*—the latter term denoting sanctuaries honouring ancestors or *hyañ*—to bolster his new kingdom’s legitimacy (Van der Meulen 1977, p. 106). Another term often used in the Old Javanese inscriptions, *kabuyutan*, is likewise a sanctuary to ancestors. The WMP term *sañ hyañ* was often also used interchangeably with, or in addition to, *srī* or *bhaṭāra* as the honorific for deities.

At the Sumatran Buddhist monuments of Candi Tinggi in Muara Jambi and Candi Bungsu in Muara Takus, tiered stepped bases dominate compositions that feature *stūpikās* surrounding a central *stūpa* at the summit. The arrangement on Candi Bungsu of a central *stūpa* surrounded by a circle of *stūpikās*, recorded by Ijzerman in an 1893 report and no longer extant today, is “reminiscent of the upper terrace of Borobudur” (Chihara 1996, pp. 217–18). Unlike the temples in the

Javanese context, however, the epigraphic record for these Sumatran sites do not furnish direct references to terms denoting ancestral mounds in connection with these Indic sanctuaries, although the prominence of the tall stepped bases strongly suggests a very similar association.

6. Terraced *Natar*-Complexes, Unconventional *Maṇḍala*, and Layout Principles

Terraced Indic sanctuary complexes built by WMP speakers may assume two forms—concentric layouts that merge the square *maṇḍala* grid with the concentric *pundèn* mound, and ex-centric layouts that combine the autochthonous *natar*-type complexes and linear *pundèn* terraces with original, unconventional *maṇḍala* grid layouts. In Central Java a number of temple complexes integrate the terraced mound or *pundèn* with a series of walled compounds, called the *natar* in Java, a layout format seen in a number of Austronesian building traditions. In many architectural assemblages, extensive series of compounds, enclosures or gradually rising stone-faced terraces extend far beyond the core masonry sanctuary. The main shrine, which might itself be built as a *pundèn*, usually as a tall, stepped masonry base, is located in the innermost or final court.

The contrast and typological discontinuity between Central and East Javanese architecture has been rather overstated. Central Javanese sites were also used in the thirteenth century—Dieng has dated inscriptions as late as 1210 while Candi Belahan's Gateway A dates from the eleventh century (Resink 1968). Further, while ex-centric layouts with walled courtyards and the incorporation of wooden architecture, including for the main shrine, are a feature of many East Javanese *natar*-type temple complexes, they also characterize several Central Javanese temples, including the Śailendra-era Mahāyāna Buddhist temples at Plaosan Lor, which present a unique layout with two rectangular stone halls and a third wooden pavilion (*pendopo*) each with its own enclosure, and arranged in a line along their long axis facing west (see Figure 11.4)—the *pendopo* platform and the tripartite division into an ex-centric composition of compounds do not seem to conform to a known *maṇḍala* format (Miksic, Nayati

FIGURE 11.4



Paosan Lor, Mahāvāna Buddhist Temple Complex, Central Java, Ninth Century, with Two Double-storey Rectangular Stone Halls based on Wooden Prototypes (see Figure 11.7) but Surmounted by *Stūpikās* and Diminishing False Storeys

Source: Author.

and Tjahjono 2001). However, Long (2009, p. 82) posits that Plaosan Lor along with the ruined ex-centric Plaosan Kidul array of temples to its south, are together laid out in accordance with a particular *maṇḍala*. If Long's analysis is correct, then Plaosan Lor and Kidul, like the ex-centric stepped base of Jajaghu (Jago) from the East Javanese period (O'Brien 1988), present truly remarkable and unconventional *maṇḍala* layouts that do not follow any known Indian precedent. The extensive Śailendra-era Ratu Boko complex meanwhile contains elaborate terraces and courtyards. The Plaosan and Ratu Boko Buddhist complexes exhibit layouts that are clearly not derived from the straightforward application of Indian *śāstric* prescriptions alone and seem to point to the tradition of walled compounds among Austronesian-speaking societies.

A recent detailed study of Central Javanese temples concluded that the “more Indian” concentric temples were mainly Buddhist, while the linear terraced temples were Hindu (Degroot 2009, pp. 176–77). However, the examples of Plaosan Lor and Kidul and of Ratu Boko—both Buddhist—caution against such a neat association. Moreover, the Hindu Javanese complexes at Prambanan and Sambisari are concentric in layout, with *pundèn*-type terraces. Prambanan's overall layout comprises three concentric enclosures that are terraced. The outermost enclosure is tilted off axis, while the innermost enclosure is raised upon a high stone plinth with gateways and balustrades. The middle enclosure comprises four terraces corresponding to four rows of *perwara* temples.⁶ At Sambisari in Central Java, the main Hindu sanctuary sits upon a walled stone plinth set upon “a stepped pyramid with stairways projecting from the axes” akin to Borobudur's first stage—only two of the terraces have been excavated due to the water table level of the land (Dumarçay 1986, pp. 48–49) (see Figure 11.5).

The ex-centric linear terraced Hindu temple layout in the Central Javanese period is represented by Candi Barong and Ijo. The three-tiered terraced courtyards of Barong, a Vaiṣṇava temple, comprise stone-faced

⁶ Dumarçay (1986, p. 42) mistakenly refers to only three terraces for Prambanan's middle enclosure.

FIGURE 11.5



Sambisari, Hindu Temple Complex, Central Java, Ninth Century, with Concentric Stepped Terraces Recalling the Punden Ancestral Mound, and a Stone Central Shrine with Pillar Bases for a Wooden Superstructure

Source: Courtesy of Andrea Acri.

retaining walls and various gateways, while Ijo comprises seventeen buildings on eleven terraces as identified by the Yogyakarta archaeological service (Degroot 2009, p. 131).

Away from Java, the ex-centric, linear layout of terraces is seen at the only extensively-restored Kedah site, Candi Bukit Batu Pahat, where this aspect of its overall architectural composition is typically overlooked in discussions that focus narrowly upon the laterite brick remains. Like Sambisari, the brick shrine actually sits upon a substantial, extensive terraced base, but unlike Sambisari the terraces here are linear and ascend a slope, like those at Ijo, rather than concentric, with multiple levels ascending in the approach to the shrine, and higher levels ascending far behind it (Lamb 1960, p. 18).

The comparisons with “Austronesian building traditions” that is being invoked here requires some elaboration. First, differentiated floor platform levels are of fundamental importance among Austronesian speakers—thus for instance while such stepped floors are typical of raised wooden buildings among some Austronesian-speaking communities and symbolically denote spatial hierarchy, such stepped levels have also been faithfully replicated as four to five differentiated levels even in the Formosan (Taiwan Austronesian) houses that are not built with raised wooden platform floors, as seen in the stone-built semi-subterranean houses of the Tau or Yami of Orchid Island (Lan Yu) off Taiwan, which are built into the slopes of the island’s rocky shores, as well as in Rukai houses, which are built directly upon the ground (Oliver 1997, pp. 1231, 1234). Second, complexes of walled compounds incorporating terraced mounds are also found in the Micronesian artificial islet-settlements in basalt stone such as eleventh-century Nan Madol in Pohnpei and fifteenth-century Lelu in Kosrae (Morgan 1988; Cordy 1993), as well as in the large terraced stone platforms and courtyards that make up the *heiau* shrines of the Hawaiian islands and the *marae* complexes of French Polynesia (Crouch and Johnson 2001). Walled complexes and terraced mounds are depicted in both Central Javanese and East Javanese reliefs, such as at Borobudur, Jajaghu (Jago) and Panataran. Courtyards in Java were also denoted by the indigenous term *kuwu* (Wisseman-Christie 1999, p. 246). The principles that are discussed here continued in numerous Javanese Islamic sites long after the period under

investigation here, and the configuration and variation of these Javanese complexes, whether Indic or Islamic, with their variety of ornamented gateways and pavilion types, have not received sufficient study (Imran 2013; Imran forthcoming).

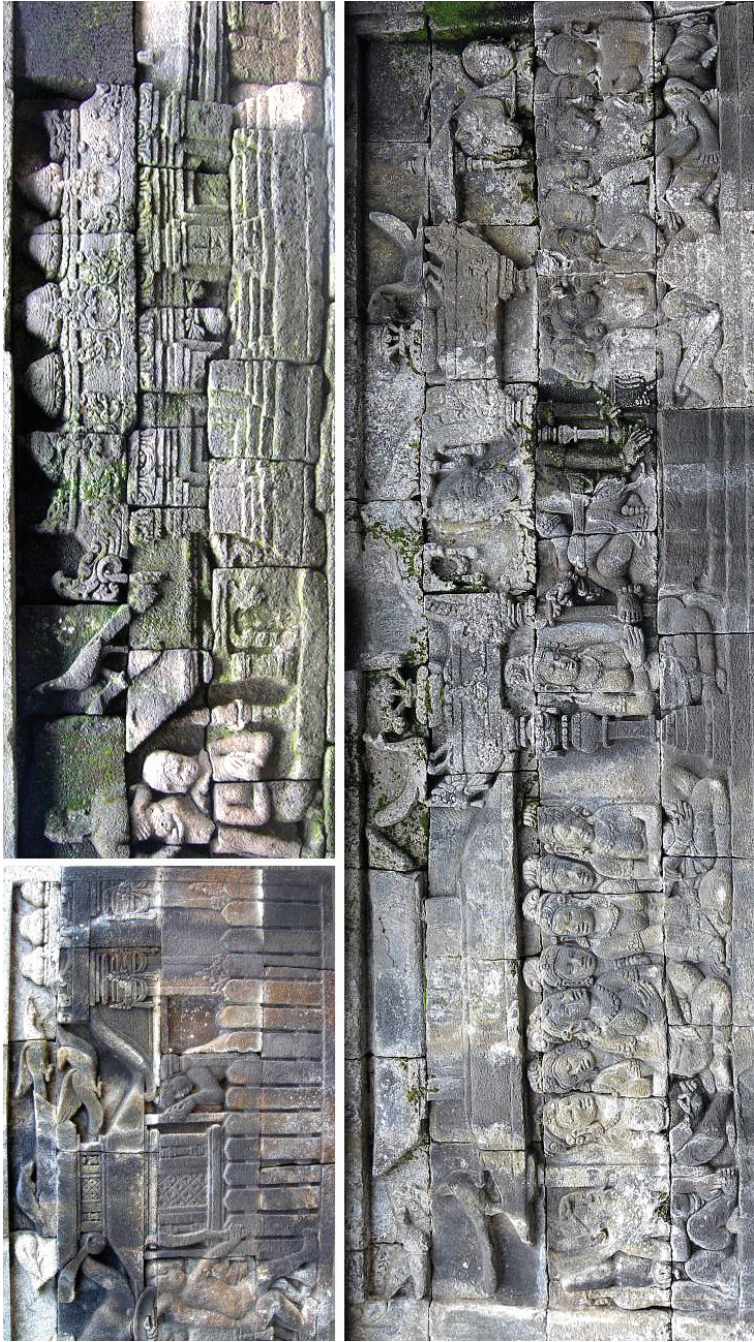
7. Wooden Sanctuaries and Arrays of Subsidiary Temples

Plaosan's two double-storey rectangular-plan main buildings and the similar main building of Sari also present an original building type that is without Indian precedent. These Mahāyāna buildings are based on an Austronesian timber building type which incidentally is depicted on several Prambanan and Borobudur relief panels (Dumarçay 1986, p. 34) (see Figure 11.7). In Plaosan and Sari they have been rendered in stone and ornamented with *stūpikās* and other accoutrements expected of a Javanese Indic edifice. The single-storey rectangular-plan main sanctuary of Banyunibo is yet another stone building based upon a local timber structure. Meanwhile, the gable-roofed and lean-to roofed entrance vestibules of Central Javanese Mahāyāna *caṇḍi* at Plaosan Lor, Plaosan Kidul and Sewu integrate Austronesian roof forms, in exactly the same fashion seen on some of the masonry buildings with roofed vestibules depicted on Borobudur relief panels (see Figure 11.6).

Walled enclosures with masonry plinths for wooden pavilions, seen as characteristic of East Javanese complexes such as Panataran, were in fact also a feature of several Central Javanese Mahāyāna complexes. The wooden pavilion of Plaosan Lor mentioned earlier was an integral part of the complex rather than a subsidiary building, judging from the results of excavations (Miksic, Nayati and Tjahjono 2001). Wooden superstructures were likewise part of the main Hindu shrines of Sambisari and Klero/Tengaran, the latter featuring a huge plinth with pillar bases surrounding a small stone cella.

In the concentric Central Javanese complexes of Prambanan and Sewu, and the ex-centric Plaosan Lor and Kidul, the main shrines are surrounded by an array of subsidiary self-standing temples that number in the hundreds: the so-called *perwara* temples. Such arrays of individual subsidiary temples are not found in India, contrary to Chihara's view (1996, p. 99) that the *perwara* array resembles the

FIGURE 11.6



The Austronesian-type Extended Gable-on-Hip Roof Buildings or Pavilions, and Entrance Vestibules of Masonry Buildings with either Lean-to or Gable Roofs Depicted on Borobudur, Central Java, Ninth Century

Source: Author.

ground plan of the Paharpur Somapura Mahāvihāra—its core sanctuary is actually surrounded by rows of conjoined cells along the *prākāra* perimeter, not individual subsidiary temples. Besides the fact that Central Javanese, Kedah, and Sumatran Indic religious complexes present layouts that are highly idiosyncratic from an Indian perspective, the study by Véronique Degroot (2009) indicates that the principles of siting and orientation of Javanese temple complexes are also informed by a number of autochthonous ideas or responses to landscape. A similarly thorough and comprehensive study awaits the numerous shrines of Kedah and Sumatran sites—the orientation of Candi Bukit Batu Pahat, for instance, does not conform to standard Indian prescription and an explanation may perhaps be sought in autochthonous symbolic signification of the natural landscape of its site.

8. Austronesian Comparative Perspective: Java's Vaiṣṇava Granary Cult-Houses and the *Pendopo*

An investigation of two vernacular wooden granary types in Java that came to stand for an Indic sanctuary further serves to highlight the importance of an Austronesian comparative framework for aspects of culture during the Indic period. Vaiṣṇava symbolism was integrated in Java to a most indigenous cult building—the rice granary shrine, which can be distinguished into two historical architectural models with a transition in the fourteenth century. The ensuing discussion demonstrates how the architectural and symbolic integration of Indic and indigenous elements also developed beyond the architecture of masonry temples. An Austronesian comparative perspective, however, also reveals an unexpected insight into a development in Java's vernacular architecture.

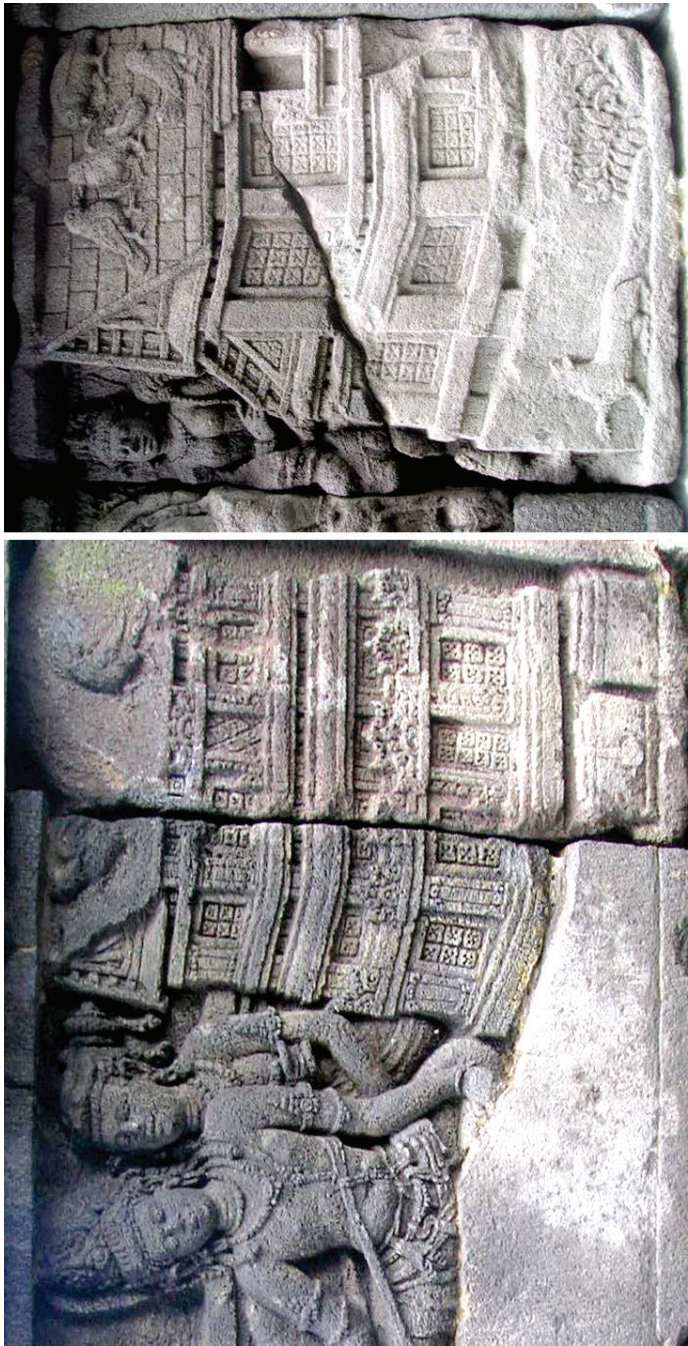
The older granary model in Java features “saddle-profile” gable roofs with outward-slanting gable ends and a granary floor raised above the ground by four or six columns with flat discs as their “capitals” that function as rat guards. This specific granary form is depicted on Borobudur and Prambanan reliefs, and corresponds with what Reimar Schefold (2004) has opted to call the “Southeast Asian-type house” defined by a sagging roof profile with extended gable ends, and a floor raised on posts. Roxana Waterson (2009) argues for this building type

to be understood as an Austronesian tradition with a wider distribution on mainland Asia and Japan beyond maritime Southeast Asia and Oceania corresponding to prehistoric Austronesian networks. According to Jacques Dumarçay (1986, p. 37), granaries of this first type became “dedicated to Śrī, the wife of Viṣṇu and the protectress of rice”, and this form persisted into the fourteenth century—further, this roof form apparently became a symbol of Vaiṣṇavism in Java, such that “a carving in brick or stone showing a sagging roofline, in no specific architectural context, as at Candi Pari or Candi Belahan, for example, is sufficient to indicate the cult of Visnu” (see Figure 11.7).

Dumarçay’s observation does not consider the subsequent developments of the Javanese granary form after the fourteenth century into the contemporary period, nor does it position the forms within an Austronesian comparative perspective. This older granary model on Java belongs to a family of structures with a geographic distribution among WMP speakers where granaries with gable roofs are built as separate structures from dwellings—namely among the Sumatran Batak Karo and Minangkabau as well as among the Sundanese of West Java and the Sa’dan Toraja of South Sulawesi—and also in Micronesia, extending to Neolithic Yunnan and Yayoi Japan (Domenig 1980, p. 85; Waterson 2009, pp. 15–18).

In contrast, a very different rice granary-shrine model with an entirely contrasting Austronesian roof form with a distribution among CMP speakers appeared in Java after the fourteenth century. As is common in CMP-speaking societies, this granary-shrine was not a separate structure from the dwelling, but was instead completely integrated as the core house unit, called the *omah jero* or *dalem ageng* in Javanese. In Java this integrated granary-shrine-dwelling became the preserve of aristocratic dwellings in the island’s interior and that of wealthy merchants and the elite along the north coastal (Pesisir) cities. It features a high-peaked hip-roof form called the *joglo* in Java, a form which again has a distribution among CMP speakers but also in Fijian spirit houses (*bure kalou*); this remarkable historical change, traceable from narrative reliefs and contemporary examples that give

FIGURE 11.7



Two-storeyed Buildings with Extended Gable Roofs Depicted on Prambanan, Central Java, Ninth Century

Source: Author.

a chronological record rare for vernacular architectural history, has implications on the understanding of Java's changing socio-economic connections during the Central and East Javanese periods, but this discussion lies beyond the scope of this chapter.

The *joglo* roof is supported by four principal columns called *soko guru*,⁷ and the whole structure is called the *pendopo* today. This term invites association with the Indian *mandapa*, while the term *soko guru* along with the term used for the rice goddess *Dewi Sri* who is placed in the *pendopo* facing the four principal columns invites the assumption that this structure has Indian origins.

Yet, despite these Sanskrit-derived terms, the *pendopo* and its associated symbolism belong to a widespread family of Austronesian structures which involve four or six principal columns beneath a tall hip or saddle-back gable roof (Sato 1991) and may function as granary-cult-dwellings, granary-pavilions, or simply cult-houses or spirit shrines. Neighbouring Sumba's *uma mbatangu/marapu* also contains four principal columns supporting a high peaked roof, and is thus closely related to the *joglo* in both formal and structural terms, but in the Sumba house the sacred granary is in the attic whereas in the Javanese house the granary is found in the rooms against the rear wall flanking the central, nuptial chamber called the *krobongan* which faces the four principal columns and in front of which the rice goddess *Dewi Sri* and her consort Sadana are placed (see Figure 11.8).⁸ A comparative typological rubric thus allows the Javanese *joglo*-roofed *pendopo* and its *Dewi Sri* cult to be contextualized within an Austronesian cult-architectural context despite the adoption of terms connected with the *mandapa* and *śrī devi*.

⁷ The four-columned, high-peaked hip-roof granary-as-dwelling is an Austronesian building form that is neglected in existing studies, and has only recently been discussed in a survey by Koji Sato (1991).

⁸ O'Neill (1994) has drawn a comparison between the Sumba house and the *meru*-derived *tajup* form of Javanese mosques rather than the *pendopo*.

FIGURE 11.8



The Now Obsolete Raised-floor Granary-pavilions of Ninth-century Java with Extended Gable-roof and Prominent Columns with Rat-guard Discs, Depicted on Borobudur, Ninth Century (top left), Contrasted with the Modern Javanese Joglo-roof Pendopo, the Rice Shrine-Granary-Dwelling Form whose Core Space is Traditionally Dedicated to the Rice Goddess *Dewi Sri* (top right). The Javanese Pendopo of Today Belongs with the Same Type as Buildings to the East such as Sumba's Granary-dwelling *Uma Mbatangu* (bottom left) and Village Shrine (bottom left foreground), and the Fijian Spirit House *Bure Kalou*, Rebuilt at the Polynesian Cultural Centre, Hawaii

Source: Author.

Both models—the older saddle-roof granary of ninth-century Java and the contemporary *joglo-pendopo* granary-shrine-dwelling—belong to a widespread Austronesian rice granary cult and is therefore an example of what de Casparis (1997, p. 51) calls “eclecticism” involving “ancient Austronesian beliefs” integrated with Indic religious associations. With an Austronesian comparative framework we are able to understand why the saddle-profile roof and then the joglo roof—two different models of the rice granary cult house—became associated with Śrī and grew in significance to denote Vaiṣṇavism between the eighth and fourteenth centuries in Java, contracting again to denote simply the rice goddess cult in Islamized Java today. These examples also point to the problem of a separation between studies of autochthonous/Austronesian vernacular wooden architecture and Indic masonry ones, whereas both forms of construction were integral to Indic architecture in Southeast Asia.

The examples also caution us against relying on the presence or use of Sanskrit terms to ascertain the “Indian” origins of specific traits without also subjecting such features to an Austronesian comparative framework. We may note that Dutch philologist Jan Laurens Andries Brandes’ (1889, pp. 122–29) compilation of ten pre-Hindu aspects of culture in Java⁹ presupposes the exclusive use of native terminology as the determining indicator of indigenous origins. But Sanskrit terms have also been applied to indigenous elements of culture and only a comparative perspective with other Austronesian societies may shed light on its origins.

⁹ “Brandes Tien Punten” or “Brandes Ten Points” are aspects of Javanese [or: Indonesian?] culture that Brandes regarded to have existed by AD 700, and to have been developed since pre-history. They are: (1) the puppet show (*wayang*), (2) gamelan or orchestra, (3) metric or measurement tools, (4) batik or ornamental art, (5) metal crafts, (6) coin exchange, (7) sailing and wind direction, (8) astronomy, (9) wet rice cultivation, and (10) organized society.

9. Beyond Sanskrit Integration: What the Non-Sanskrit Words Indicate

Beyond the surface “integration” of architectural forms, I have pointed out the sophistication by which this physical integration was reinforced through conceptual engagement expressed through hybrid terms and the *śāstric* association they are meant to evoke. Thus, the term *kamūlān*, itself a hybrid term that is integrated with the indigenous *pundèn* form, is not an isolated example. Many other indigenous and Indic concepts and their associated terms were also interchangeably translated or integrated. An indigenous trait or phenomenon might be assigned a Sanskrit term; conversely a practice or feature of Indic origin may be called by an indigenous name. Such instances of conceptual and literary integration can be seen in further examples of hybrid terms involving the application of Sanskrit upon non-Indic aspects of culture. Restricting ourselves to key indigenous systems of organizing time and space, we may cite the following cases. First, the indigenous Javanese five- and six-day cycles *peken/pasaran* (the root word in the latter term being the Persian *pasar*!) and *parinkelan* respectively are also assigned Sanskrit terms *pañcawara* and *sadwara* respectively; they continued to operate alongside the Indic seven-day cycle or *saptawara*. Meanwhile, the earliest dated Old Javanese inscription that has been found (685 Śaka or 763 CE), from Batang, in the north coast of Java, contains the Old Javanese (or Javanized?) month name *asuji* (Griffiths 2012, p. 477). The example of Javanese chronograms has already been mentioned earlier. Yet another hybrid term *monco-pat* (five-four) is used to refer to an autochthonous Javanese spatial classification system (Ossenbruggen 1977; Lombard 1996, vol. III, p. 101).

Such hybrid terms suggest the extent of the literary engagement by WMP societies with the Indic cultural world, but a look at the terms or names that remain non-Sanskrit and untranslated is just as instructive and revealing. Possibly the most lucid evidence against the theory of foreign origin for WMP rulers during the early Indic era comes, ironically, from the earliest Indic inscriptions from four WMP-speaking societies. They record the moment when local ruling lineages adopted Sanskrit titles, but simultaneously reveal also the non-Sanskrit names of their

immediate forebears. They bear testimony to the conscious, deliberate linguistic-cultural adoption of Sanskrit.¹⁰

In the Old Malay and Old Javanese inscriptions, we encounter the remarkable fact that several aspects most intimately connected to the core of the royal domain and to the institution of shipping were left “untranslated” or un-Sanskritized despite the deliberate Indic *śāstric* reference or Sanskrit terms assigned to so many indigenous elements. —The Old Malay and Old Javanese inscriptions, despite their heavy Sanskritization, retain the indigenous terms for lord/ruler, the royal domain/palace complex, and the royal capital or core settlement, namely *dātu/hāji/tuhān*, *kadātuan*, and *vanua/wanua*; the royal title remains *ḍapunta hiyañ*; and as mentioned earlier the term for the “park” dedicated by the ruler of Śrīvijaya as a sign of his compassion as a Bodhisattva is still *parlak* even though it bears the Sanskrit name Śrīkṣetra (Coedès and Damais 1992; Kulke 1993). Similarly the indigenous cult of *Tandrun Luah* and *Ulu* are invoked as guardians of *kadātuan* Śrīvijaya even as, simultaneously as Woodward (2004, p. 336) notes, the Śrīvijaya inscriptions indicate familiarity with Mahāyānist doctrines, specifically of Perfection Path Buddhism.

10. Old Malay Agency: Shippers, Trade and Buddhist Literary Networks

The indigenous title for ship captains (*puhawañ*) is also retained in Old Malay inscriptions. This example, along with the ones cited above, provide strong evidence for both the non-Indian origins of Sanskritized

¹⁰ In the fifth-century Kutei inscriptions, Mūlavarman is recorded as the grandson of Kuṇḍuṅga. One of the fifth-century Tarumanagara inscriptions of Pūrṇavarman mentions a father Pinabāhu and an unnamed grandfather. The Old Malay Sojomerto inscription of circa late seventh century from north coast Central Java states that the father of ḍapunta Selendra—a name that has occasioned much controversy—was Santanu. Finally, the Canggal inscription of 732 CE mentions Sañjaya’s father Sannāha whose sister is Sanna—the reference to a paternal aunt is interesting and may indicate a form of matrilineal reckoning, in other words an Austronesian accent on the inheritance of rank integrated into Indic conceptions of power.

royal families in early Indic WMP societies and of the agency of indigenous shippers, and suggests their symbiotic relationship. In the Telaga Batu inscription of Śrīvijaya, *puhavañ* appears alongside royal functionaries of the capital and the staff of the royal household (Kulke 1993). A number of Old Malay inscriptions from Java record *puhawañ* as the sponsors of temples (Suhadi 1983). In fact, altogether seven Old Malay inscriptions from Java connect persons bearing Malay titles to shipping or temple sponsorship or construction (Suhadi 1983; van der Meulen 1979, p. 32, fn. 43). Even more astonishingly, the Old Malay inscriptions of Śrīvijaya include words that can only be understood by relating them to Batak, Malagasy, or Old Ma'anyan (Coedès and Damais 1992, pp. 72–82), thus linking Śrīvijaya directly to the trans Indian Ocean Cinnamon Route to East Africa and Madagascar (Dahl 1991; Miller 1969).

Indeed, evidence of the primacy of Malay-speaking shippers' networks and agency in long-distance trade from the pre-Indic into the early Indic period—and of the role of the Old Malay language in Buddhism—is further reinforced by a number of other observations. Peter Bellwood (1995, p. 114) associates the distribution of protohistoric metallurgical artefacts particularly with the trade networks of the “Western Austronesian area” beginning from 500 BC. More significantly, Bellwood opines that this wide-ranging maritime trade had a linguistic effect—namely that this period witnessed “a great deal of linguistic assimilation of prior diversity” involving “the Malayic languages (especially Old Malay itself), Javanese and perhaps other languages”.

Bellwood's conjecture is in agreement with the wide distribution and early emergence of literacy in Old Malay using Indic script, as noted above and including the inscription from Laguna de Bay near Manila dated AD 900 incorporating Old Malay, Old Javanese and Old Tagalog (Postma 1992). This protohistoric development enters the Indic period when by AD 500, “the Western Austronesian area was perhaps a zone of continuously-flourishing inter-island travel and trade”.

The Old Malay language appears to have been a literary lingua franca for Buddhist works: in AD 605 a Chinese general took 1,350 Buddhist works in “K'un-lun language” from Campa's capital (Sarkar 2001b, p. 63), while in AD 672 Yijing, who stayed six months in Śrīvijaya en route to

Tamralipti, records that many Chinese Buddhist pilgrims “made prolonged stay [in Śrīvijaya] and learned or could speak *K’un-lun*” (Sarkar 2001a, p. 27 and Wolters 1986, p. 28).¹¹ The picture of the maritime connections of Old Malay speakers painted by Bellwood is reinforced by what is recorded of the *K’un-lun* in Chinese sources. The Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Yijing referred to the eleven principal *chou* (port-cities) of the Straits of Melaka region, which included Śrīvijaya and Malayu, as “generally known by the general name of ‘the countries of *K’un-lun*,’ since the people of *K’un-lun* first visited Tongking and Canton” (Braddell 1980, p. 45). Further, we know that in the eighth century the *K’un-lun* were distinguished from the *Po-lo-men* (Brahmins, or Indians) and the *Po-ssu* (Parsi) as merchants along the river of Guangzhou, as noted by Kanshin in circa AD 750 (Guy 2001, p. 283). It is clear from these sources that the term *K’un-lun* refers to Old Malay speakers of the Straits of Melaka.

Chinese sources (with a mention in Ptolemy’s *Periplus*) and later Portuguese sources refer to large ships (*bo*) of the *k’un-lun* (in the *Periplus* rendered as “kolandia phonta”) in the Indian Ocean and in Southeast Asian waters (Manguin 1996). The Old Malay and Old Javanese term *sambau* for sea-going ships was adopted into Old Khmer and, later, Thai (Coedès and Damais 1992, p. 47) while WMP shipping in the Bay of Bengal—and hence connections to India—appears to be affirmed by the presence of the term *wañkañ* in Old Mon inscriptions and in early first millennium Tamil Sangam texts (Manguin 1996).

In light of the evidence cited above on Malay shipping and the role of Old Malay language and its speakers, Keith Taylor’s (1976, p. 49) remarks appear apposite:

Compared with the Malayo-Polynesians, Indo-Aryan and Dravidian seafaring tendencies were notably low; in light of this, it might make more sense to see the Malayo-Polynesians going to India and coming back with Sanskrit than to invent Indian Sanskritizers radiating through Southeast Asia. The truth of the matter can be expected to lie somewhere between these bald extremes.

¹¹ Other Buddhist pilgrims also stopped over in other Śrīvijaya-controlled ports along the Straits—chiefly Malayu and Kedah (Wolters 1979, p. 5). Yijing, for instance, stayed for two months in Malayu in AD 672.

We are reminded here of the point raised by de Casparis and Mabbett (1992, p. 287) on the greater likelihood of the Brahmans operating in Southeast Asia being Southeast Asians rather than Indians, particularly given the curious fact that Indian *gotra* names are not found in Southeast Asian inscriptions. Their contention lends further weight to Bosch's *śāstric* thesis.

11. Conclusion

By analogy with the innovations in literary culture reviewed earlier, two forms of innovation in Indic material culture among WMP-speakers can be distinguished: first, the original translation or reworking of Indic forms and concepts, and second, the syncretic integration of Indic and Austronesian sources—including in Śailendra-era Mahāyāna Buddhist monuments. The extent and variety of innovations in Javanese Indic architecture bear no parallels anywhere else in the Indic world. The variety of innovations upon Indic templates shown in Javanese, Sumatran and Kedah temple architecture and its hybridity with Austronesian typological features point to local initiative rather than to Indian tutelage and conception. Any neat attribution of the Indic architectural legacy in the WMP and larger Southeast Asian context to foreign design is always highly problematic.

Given the early onset and extent of translation and integration between Indic and indigenous concepts and forms and the overwhelming evidence for indigenous maritime agency—specifically by speakers of Old Malay—neither the “Sanskrit Cosmopolis” perspective nor the opposite reactionary emphasis on localization or indigenization is adequate, since they are both premised upon comparisons with India and thus do not go beyond the presumption of a model of centre-periphery relations that presume Indian agency and indigenous passivity followed belatedly by a “vernacular” response. The rejection of the indigenous-Indic dichotomy implies that the analysis of the Austronesian-Indic cultural encounter and its outcomes in architecture and art should seek to identify the interaction and mutual transformation of the autochthonous and Indic simultaneously.

Despite the problems with some of his ideas mentioned earlier, Quaritch Wales (1961, p. 18) may have been among the first to have pointed the way to a perspective that does not fix the “constant features” of local culture as an immutable essence, but rather, through his concept of “local genius” explains it “as a preference” for aspects of Indic culture to which it is amenable, expressed in “a specific way of handling the newly acquired [Indic] concepts”; thus, local genius “will determine the reaction to the new culture and give direction to subsequent evolution”. To recapitulate: in Java, Sumatra and Kedah, at the formal-physical level we can point to two “constant features” that shaped Indic architecture whose character as a persistent “preference” can be more fully appreciated through an Austronesian comparative perspective. These are the importance of terraced mounds or differentiated levels and second, the use of walled complexes to demarcate places of religious or regal importance. Yet a third aspect comes from the singular persistence of the granary cult among Austronesian societies—and in Java the form of this cult-house showed a remarkable change from a type with a WMP distribution to one that is found among CMP speakers.

The “local” element in the Indic civilization of WMP speakers is not some substratum that is overwhelmed before reasserting its identity later, but one that initiated the reworking and translation of Indic sources to shape Indic architecture and aspects of its synthetic culture among WMP societies from the beginning. The preceding discussion also makes it clear that “indigenous society” was not one that was isolated and static, but networked and interlinked, with the WMP groups, including speakers of Old Malay and Old Javanese, engaged in various roles. Key among these roles is the close link between Malay shipping and Buddhist scholarship, including works in the Old Malay language. As discussed, Old Malay speakers have also left inscriptions in Java. Literacy among WMP speakers appears to have been more substantial than has been recognized, and “vernacular cosmopolitanism” through Buddhist literature in Old Malay preceded the construction of the earliest extant temples in Central Java by a few centuries. The local or indigenous in the Indic architecture of WMP societies is thus better understood through the careful study of the *śāstric* references recorded or reinterpreted by these societies

rather than by conjuring imagined Indian Sanskritisers—but equally by also recognizing the Austronesian references (or “preferences”) that reshaped or even fundamentally revised the form and content of Indian prescriptions or precedents, and created new types of *śāstric* symbolic signification. New approach may be greatly facilitated by asking questions relating not only to Indic *śāstric* translations, but also to an Austronesian comparative framework—in short, through the operation of a parallel cultural perspective.

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12

THE LORD OF THE LAND RELATIONSHIP IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Robert Wessing¹

1. Introduction

This chapter examines the position of a frequently mentioned figure in the ethnographic literature on Southeast Asia² who is often called the Lord of the Land, though he is known locally by various titles (cf. Tannenbaum and Kammerer 2003). Although I focus on Southeast Asia and specifically Indonesia, this delimitation is ultimately an artificial one because the patterns I describe are found in a much wider area and, as is clear from discussions by Abalahin (2011), Shaffer (1994), and Sen (2014), the “boundary” between East, Southeast, and

¹ I thank Jos Platenkamp and Rosemary Gianno for their comments on a previous draft of this chapter.

² This chapter is written in the “ethnographic present”. The extent to which the phenomena discussed continue locally varies considerably as peoples’ perceptions have come to be influenced by religious teachings and modern schooling (see Wessing 2013).

South Asia, and ultimately also Austronesia (Sahlins 2008), is an elusive and shifting one. It is, therefore, perhaps better to consider this region as a component of what Mus (1975) characterized as “Monsoon Asia”, especially given the common cultural substratum noted by Mus, and the active participation of regional traders in the commerce that linked East, Southeast, and South Asia to the Middle Eastern Muslim caliphates and ultimately Europe (Shaffer 1994; Sen 2014), and the state and local level cultural exchanges that inevitably resulted from this participation (e.g. Wessing 2011, in press; Sen 2014). I therefore use the term Southeast Asia here as a “convenient geographical indicator” (Fifield 1976, p. 151), rather than as a reference to a “bounded” cultural entity.³

While parts of the argument to be presented here have been discussed at length before, e.g. the idea of the Stranger King, much of the data on villagers’ relationship with the spirit world has existed primarily as scattered mentions in the ethnographic literature: locally specific and not seen to form a coherent pattern with other such local traditions, and the relationship of these to ideas such as that of the Stranger King. This chapter, therefore, attempts to demonstrate their mutual interdependence and ultimate unity, and in doing so aims to show the highlighted pattern to be a trans-local cultural motif that, with other such motifs, forms a coherent substratum underlying (traditional) power relations in Southeast Asia, an integrative or centripetal factor in an area increasingly seen as eluding definition.

In spite of its above mentioned frequent appearance, it is not always clear what is meant by the term Lord of the Land, or who the occupant of the position is. In the literature this can vary from a spirit, the founder of a community, the head of a village or localized descent line, or even a king. Thus Scholz (1962, pp. 9, 12) writes about the matter generally that

³ Although the name Southeast Asia was used prior to and during the Second World War, its popularity as a regional concept only came about since the War (Fifield 1976, p. 151).

the Lord of the Land is the leader of a descent group who, in a land-use area covering one or more villages, is traditionally considered to be a founder [first clearer of the land]. In his capacity as leader of this descent group the Lord of the Land represents the communal right to the use of the land, and within the legal community [e.g. the category of people covered by the local regulations] fulfills a role that encompasses land-rightly, priestly, and often also political tasks.⁴

In other words, Scholz sees the Lord of the Land primarily as an administrator with added “priestly” functions. Although he later depicts these tasks as more equally balanced (1962, p. 155), his emphasis remains on the administrative function (1962, p. 128): “because the head of the village (*Herr des Dorfes*) can give strangers the right to build a house in the village and to lay out a field on land belonging to the village, he exercises a real function of the *Tuan Tanah*” (*Herr des Bodens*) (cf. Ellen 1978, p. 86; Visser 1984, p. 159).⁵ The power of disposal of the land, and the right to determine who may or may not exploit it, are indeed an important aspect of the position. However, as will be seen, this right is predicated on the occupant’s cosmological position and his relationship to other claimants to the title.⁶

The priestly function mentioned by Scholz rests on the fact that the founding line not only has authority over the land, but must also maintain contact with the spirit-forces resident in the earth, the

⁴ *Der Herr des Bodens ist der Vorsteher einer Verwandengruppe, die in einem ein oder mehrere Dörfer umfassendes Bodenverfügungsgebiet auf Grund der Traditionellen Überlieferungen als die Erstbesiedlerin angesehen wird. In seiner Eigenschaft als Vorsteher dieser Verwandengruppe ist der Herr des Bodens der Repräsentant des gemeinschaftlichen Bodenverfügungsrechtes und übt innerhalb der Rechtsgemeinschaft ein Amt aus, das bodenrechtliche, priesterliche und manchmal auch politische Aufgaben umfaßt.*

⁵ Similarly, Bertling (1955, p. 35) cites Holleman as noting that in Ambon the lords of the land (*grondheren*) are the heads of lineages that represent the founding families in the area. In the Kerinci valley in Sumatra, also, the *tuan tanah* (the lord of the soil) is the representative of the oldest lineage that is descended from the founder of the village, the first person to settle in an area.

⁶ In colonial times the reach of the title was even extended to the administrators of Dutch plantations (Fokker 1912, p. 63; De Jong 1998, p. 265).

forest,⁷ and the water of the area under their control (Bakels 2000, pp. 81–82). Ter Haar (1946, p. 67) indeed notes that in the literature the term *grondvoogd* (guardian of the land) is used in two ways, namely as the title for those with authority in matters of land-holding in the community, and second to refer to a kind of magician-mediator⁸ between the people and the spirits of the land. Elsewhere we read about Timor that the king (Dutch: *vorst*) is addressed as Lord of the Earth or Priest of the Earth (*rai nain*), which is also the title given to local tutelary spirits (Bertling 1955, p. 33; see below). This emphasizes the connection of the Lord of the Land with the spirits, something Van Vollenhoven (1925, p. 535) characterized as the old religious significance of his position. Indeed, the king is equivalent to, or at least categorized with, the spirits that protect the earth, spirits that elsewhere are said to be the real owners of the land (Downs 1956, p. 26; Buijs 2006, p. 21; Scholz 1962, p. 155), while the Lord of the Land is sometimes seen as the ruler's spiritual counterpart (Van Wouden 1968, p. 82).

To summarize, the Lord of the Land is often said to be the person or descendant of the person who first cleared the land in either a local community or a larger region. Depending on the locality, he may be the administrator of land-rights but can also be the mediator between the people and the spirits, the ultimate owners of the land. These spirits guard over its fertility, and the founder must cooperate with them if he is to succeed. At times these functions are in the hands of one person, at other times they are not (Scholz 1962, p. 157). Rather than

⁷ The disappearance of the forest from many areas of Southeast Asia does not mean that it has everywhere ceased to be a factor in peoples' cosmological perceptions. While the extensive woodlands near villages have gone, people in East Java, for instance, now speak of forests inhabited by guardian spirits and (also disappeared) tigers as existing, some vague distance away, and often point to the Alas Purwa forest in Java's East Hook and the island Nusabarongan as places to which they have retreated (cf. Wessing 1995, pp. 196, 209).

⁸ Bertling (1955, p. 40) writes that the legal term *grondvoogd* (guardian of the land) fails to appreciate this person's divinatory tasks.

attributing these differences to local variation, the aim of this chapter, as was pointed out above, is to explore the ideas that at least in the past underlay and unified these usages throughout the region. Most of the data presented will be from Indonesia, the area with which I am most familiar. However, as is clear from Tannenbaum and Kammerer (2003), the phenomenon, which is based on the relationship between people and nature spirits, exists and is current throughout Southeast Asia, and is also found in India, China, and Japan, extending its scope beyond Mus' 1975 "Monsoon Asia" (see e.g. Stutley and Stutley 1984, pp. 345–46; Falk 1973; Schnepel 1995; Holm 2003, p. 70; Domenig 1988).

2. Spirits and People

In order to explore these ideas, it is necessary to first look at the relationship between the various local groups and the spirits. This is important because traditionally throughout Southeast Asia, and South and East Asia as well, people utilize the land on which their settlements and fields lie only as a kind of leasehold. The owners of the land are said to be spirits that embody the land's fertility, and thus can influence the prosperity of the human group (cf. Buijs 2006, p. 45). These spirits' approval is required before settlements can be built and crops planted.⁹ Even after this permission has initially been obtained, the spirit(s) must be notified and feasted when a new agricultural cycle commences. They are invited to visit the community and participate in

⁹ Obtaining this agreement is not always easy. The *babad* (story, history) of Yogyakarta relates that when the Sultan of Ngrum sent out an expedition to populate Java, the spirits residing there resisted with all their might. The "Southern Ocean roared and Mt. Mērapī thundered [and] the Ngrum expedition was destroyed almost to a man" (Ricklefs 1974a, pp. 342–43). This stiff resistance, however, may reflect the fact that the Ngrum expedition brought the Islamic faith with it, which in principle forbids dealings with the very spirits opposing the expedition. Normally things go rather more smoothly.

e.g. dances and a ritual feast (cf. Wessing 1999a; Anwarmufied n.d., pp. iii, 34).

The whole arrangement, therefore, is based on an agreement between the settlers and the spirits. As Lehman (2003, p. 16) notes for Southeast Asia generally,

... the original and ultimate owners having dominion over the face of the land are the spirit lords commonly associated with more or less prominent features of the landscape. What is rather more particular to this part of the world is the idea that when the first human beings began to clear any given tract of land, they had to make a contract with these spirit lords. This contract ensured that there would continue to be communication between the two parties as long as both sides lived up to the requirements of that contract. The exclusive right to serve as mediators between the lords and human settlers is supposed to pass to the hereditary heirs and successors of the original founders of the settlement, in perpetuity.

In brief, the relationship rests on an agreement between the first founder of the human community and the owner-spirit of the place: in return for permission to utilize the land the human community committed itself to make specified offerings and, quite often, feast the spirit in an annual ritual (cf. Wessing 1999a; 2006a; Hayami 2003, p. 139). As Coville (2003, p. 88) writes, this agreement “is the very essence of life”, since the success of the community, and thus the lives of the settlers depend on it (cf. Buijs 2006, pp. 45–46). The feasting of the spirit, or other offerings made to it, can be seen as counter-prestations in the sense of Mauss (1967) for the spirit’s gift of fertility. Through this mechanism the spirit is enmeshed in a set of mutual obligations with the founder and his or her community: the spirit is, at least partially, socialized. This is the only way that interaction between the two sides is possible.

Since the community’s founder made the agreement, the responsibility of assuring that it continues to be lived up to rests with him and his descendants. These persons, each in turn, personify the agreement with the lord of the land; among the Karen of Thailand, the community must

even move after the death of the founder or his descendant in order to renew the compact (Hayami 2003, pp. 139, 140). In other words, there the successor to the position becomes a founder in his or her own right.¹⁰

The obligation to continue the compact with the spirit makes the founder's descent line an important one, as this responsibility cannot be casually transferred to others (cf. Buijs 2006, p. 21). It is also a powerful position because with it comes control over the distribution of the land (Scholz 1962, p. 9; Bakels 2000, p. 82; Hayami 2003, p. 134). Most important in the human community, therefore, is the line descended from the community's founder, the person who established a relationship with the spirit-owner,¹¹ allowing the community to occupy and utilize the land.

This relationship sometimes takes the form of a marriage between the two parties. Thus Bakels (2000, p. 114) writes of a marriage between the spirit and the founder of the village, creating a bond between the two parties. This marriage, Bakels continues, is similar to the one made between an immigrant founder of a kingdom and an autochthonous woman. This would imply either that spirits and humans are interfertile, or that this is a spiritual marriage that enhances the fertility of the ruler, who then has offspring with an autochthonous human woman (Wessing 1997, p. 333). The dividing line between autochthonous women and local spirits is indeed rather vague here (see below).

So important is this relationship between the spirit(s) and the founder's line that colonial and also post-colonial measures combining various areas administratively often did not affect them. The areas that were combined "still maintain a degree of independence, and community life is conducted within the old borders" (Scholz 1962, p. 10). In other

¹⁰ Esser (1877, p. 164) reports from Sumba that the *tuan tanah* is considered immortal. At his death his son buries him in the yard and immediately succeeds him. The deceased holder of the office is never mentioned again.

¹¹ How this is done need not concern us here. For one description see Domenig (1988).

words, ritual concerns override administrative ones (cf. Hayami 2003, p. 136).¹²

3. Spirit Owners

As we saw, one category of Lords of the Land are the spirit-owners of the soil and the forest (Bakels 2000, p. 104; Buijs 2006, p. 45). They are thought to be old and to have always been in the area, to be “the elders” that embody the fertility of the soil,¹³ and must be propitiated if humans are to exploit the resources of the forest and the soil (cf. Downs 1956, pp. 26, 93; Platenkamp 2007, p. 107; DeBernardi 2006, p. 175). Other than this, however, little can be said about them. The spirits may embody the fertility of the land, but this fertility is unordered or random. In order to be of use to humans it must be made orderly or channelled, something that comes about through an interaction between the spirit and a human founder during which a relationship

¹² In 1970–71, during fieldwork in the village Pameuntasan in West Java, people identified by name settlements (*kampung*) that had long been administratively combined with other *kampung*. To the people involved, these old names continued to be significant. Although efforts at the consolidation of these hamlets into villages date back to 1844 (Anonymous 1876, p. 175; Hardeman 1906, p. 2), with an official governmental decision in 1879 (Van den Berg 1901, p. 13) followed by the *gemeenteordonnantie* (community ordinance) in 1906 (Korn 1941, p. 122), the old arrangements tended to prevail, and people had little liking for the new ones (Van Dam 1937, p. 81; Korn 1941, p. 122). This primacy of ritual considerations over administrative ones is not always clear in the literature, which tends to reflect the interests of the compilers or their employers. Thus, Van Vollenhoven (1919, pp. 8–9), a Dutch colonial expert on customary law, logically focused on the power of disposal (*beschikkingsrecht*) over land, rather than on the ritual basis of this power, even though he recognized the power’s religious background throughout Indonesia. Similarly Visser (1984, p. 159) writes about the term *tuan tanah* as “a label for quite variable social-territorial phenomena [that were] originally part of the territorial rights of the first inhabitants of area”, without exploring the ritual basis of these phenomena.

¹³ Henninger (2004, p. 49) observes, however, that these entities are not necessarily the embodiment or personification of e.g. fertility, but must rather be seen as references to “the trepidation inspired by whatever is mysterious and awesome”.

is established,¹⁴ and the spheres of the spirit and the incoming human community are defined.¹⁵

This is indeed a crucial point in the process of founding a community. In the act of founding, the founder separates an area that will be occupied by the community and its agricultural lands from the previously undifferentiated forest. In other words, the act creates a boundary that defines two spheres of interest, and across which relations between the spirits and the people are conducted. This boundary is especially marked, and is the location where the community's various guardians are located, including the tutelary spirit and (perhaps later) the guardian ancestor, who may appear in the form of a tiger (Wessing 2006a, p. 40; 1986, pp. 34–40).¹⁶

¹⁴ At the village level this is often seen as a relationship between equals (e.g. Schefold 2002, p. 428)—unlike the relationship of kings with the spirit world (see below).

¹⁵ Jos Platenkamp (personal communication) notes that in mainland Southeast Asia this idea of separation is known especially among the Thai, Lao, Miao, Lanten, Black Tai peoples. “To claim the fertility of spirit owned territory, or the embodiment of ‘life’ in humans, houses etc.”, he writes, “one binds cotton threads around a plot, a house, a human body and the like”. See also Wessing 2010.

¹⁶ Boundaries are the locations par excellence of guardian spirits (Wessing and Jordaan 1997). The idea of the village as separate from the forest is illustrated by a tale told by the Angami Naga who live on the border between India and Myanmar (Hutton 1921, p. 529; 1969, pp. 261–62). This tale relates that man, the tiger, and the spirit were the sons of one mother. While the man was a good son, the tiger grumbled and was unpleasant to live with. The three also kept different diets, making life difficult for their mother. One day she grew tired of the disharmony and set up a grass marker in the forest. The man and the tiger were to race to it, and the winner could live in the village while the loser would live in the forest. However, man and the spirit made an alliance in which the spirit agreed to shoot an arrow into the marker, allowing the man to claim he had reached it first. So it happened, and the tiger retreated to the jungle, e.g. he left the sphere of the village and crossed the boundary into the wild. A Sumatran tale about the conflict between Serunting and his brother-in-law Rie Tabing (Barendregt 2002, p. 294) illustrates the same principle: the champion Rie Tabing is said to have been the original inhabitant of the area around Mt. Dempo. He was reputed to be invincible. Rie Tabing's sister, however, told her husband Serunting that Rie Tabing had hidden his spirit in a clump of *ilalang* grass. Knowing this, Serunting was able to wound Rie Tabing and force him to retreat to the mountains where he became Lord of the Wilderness, and, it is said, a companion of tigers. In this tale, Serunting takes the role of the man in the previous tale, while the sister acts that of the spirit, which is often a female entity (cf. Buijs 2006, pp. 17–19; Pemberton 1994,

From the human point of view, this relationship is said to bring order or civilization into the spirits' domain, the humans bringing in a cosmology that incorporates the spirits and thereby makes them at least somewhat orderly. This is necessary because dealing with the spirits is not without danger, not because they represent unordered chaos, as is often assumed (e.g. Hayami 2003, p. 138), but rather because the forest and its guardians have rules that differ from those of human society (cf. Schefold 1989; 2002, p. 427). While generally similar, the habits and preferences of individual local spirits may differ, as may their ritual requirements. Such customs, therefore, are local affairs (Bakels 2000, p. 147; Kroes 2002, p. 143), making the spirits somewhat unpredictable, especially for outsiders. The irritability of these spirits and their quickness to take offence at human errors and slights, accounts for people's reluctance to enter the territory of unfamiliar ones (cf. Pemberton 1994, p. 237). An inadvertent error can have dire consequences (Wessing 2010).

The act of founding, then, establishes a new domain in the territory that previously belonged exclusively to spirits. It creates a boundary between the sphere of the human settlement, or human order, and the forest where the spirits live. Going into the forest means entering the domain of the guardians of the forest (*penunggu*), including the tiger. This forest continues to be important, even though, as the community expands, only a symbolic remnant of it remains (Bakels 2000, p. 104; Wessing 1999b; cf. Visser 1984, p. 41; Downs 1956, p. 21).

p. 263; Wessing 1986). Rie Tabing, finally, becomes the expelled tiger that guards the forest and, under proper circumstances, the boundary of the village as well (cf. Schefold 2002, p. 423; Wessing 1986). The conjunction of Serunting's wife and the spirit can also be seen in Bakels' (2000, p. 147) account of the founder among the Kerinci (Sumatra), who is said to marry an autochthonous woman, usually a beautiful forest fairy, though she occasionally may look like an ape. In Sulawesi also the male founder married a local spirit, a woman that emerged from the waters (Buijs 2006, pp. 19, 50).

4. The Village Founding Line

The existence of human communities, then, is only possible through human cooperation with the spirit world, and the spirits, while central because of their position as owners of the soil, can only be understood in relation to the various categories of founders that come into contact with them. These latter include founders of villages, the ones who first opened the forest in a particular area, but also previous inhabitants of a location, and those having power over a larger area, such as rulers or heads of (extended) lineages (Dutch: *stamhoofd*), depending on the political structure of the community in question.

In considering these social positions, we must be careful to place them in their individual contexts. For example, the position of village head (*kepala desa*) in Indonesia today is seductive in that in the context of the modern Indonesian state¹⁷ it indicates a person of authority and relative power in the state hierarchy. This does not necessarily mean, however, that this person is a member of the community's founding line. Although many village heads in Indonesia still are descendants of a village founder, since the troubles of the late 1960s there have also been many who were political or military appointees. Being outsiders, such appointees would have no relationship with the local tutelary spirit, and would therefore not necessarily feel an obligation to feast it or maintain other customary relations with it (cf. De Josselin de Jong 1947, p. 26). Especially in the stressful post-coup times of the early 1970s in Indonesia, such feasting might well have been considered subversive and thus dangerous.¹⁸

¹⁷ As well as in the past in the colonial state.

¹⁸ During eighteen months research in 1970–71 in especially Kampung Gajah of the village Pameuntasan in West Java (Wessing 1978) the tutelary spirit was never mentioned as such, and it was only during a return visit in 1998 to the now-autonomous village of Gajah Mekar that the nature of what in the 1970s had been a brooding presence in the hills was identified as the original tutelary spirit which had been displaced by a Muslim *jinn* (Wessing 2001, p. 43). Similarly in the East Javanese community of Alasmalang, the feasting of the tutelary spirit in the form of the *kebo-keboan* ritual was forbidden from 1970 until 1990 (Siswanto and Prasetyo 2009, pp. 96–97).

Under more traditional circumstances, however, the village leadership would have consisted of descendants of the founder (Indische Gids 1897, p. 1432; Bezemer 1921, p. 154; Geurtjens 1921, p. 187; Tichelman 1925, p. 717). Founders were persons of considerable authority in their community, being revered by their descendants, and the source of both high rank and an advantageous position regarding the distribution of land. “The first founder and his or her followers ... had free access to all resources [and were] able to choose the best dwelling, agricultural and fishing locations, and they would have had moral rights to claim and mark these against the encroachments of later comers” (Bellwood 1996, p. 30). They have precedence in their community vis-à-vis newcomers, who need permission to exploit village land (Scholz 1962, p. 8; Tambiah 1975, p. 264). Strangers and newcomers must be introduced to the ancestral founder and the tutelary spirit; in other words, they must be made into members of the community of venerated.¹⁹

However, even when only considering the “traditional” arrangement we must be cautious, as the position of administrative head may well not coincide with the ritual one, occupied by the person who liaises with the tutelary spirit, even though both may be descendants of the founder (cf. Van Wouden 1968, p. 29). Depending on local circumstances, the power held by either may differ considerably because the right to allocate agricultural land often lies with the administrative head, while relations with the spirit are maintained by the ritual leader. Sometimes, as among the Kanekes²⁰ of South Banten (West Java), these positions are combined. The head of the community, the *pu'un*, is both the ritual

¹⁹ This seems to also include newborn children and is the idea behind the *turun tanah* ritual (the first introduction to the earth; Koperberg 1934; Wessing 1978, p. 130; Rikin 1973, pp. 14–15) or to the source of water (Van der Goes 1997, p. 400, n. 23). In 1970, when doing fieldwork in the hamlet Gajah, I had to be introduced to the spirit of the founder before my work could progress.

²⁰ In the literature these people are also known as the Baduy. They themselves, however, do not use this term, but rather call themselves after the hamlet they live in, or after the village Kanekes that encompasses these hamlets (Barendregt and Wessing 2008, p. 551, n. 2).

leader and the head of the community. This can be explained by the fact that Kanekes is a ritual community, whose primary duty is the maintenance of relations with the tutelary spirit of the old Sundanese kingdom of Pajajaran (Wessing and Barendregt 2005). It is therefore not surprising that this ritual leader has great authority, and is able to harangue his villagers when they offend against the tutelary spirit's domain (Djoewisno 1987, p. 36).²¹

Elsewhere, in less ritually oriented communities, the person who liaises with the spirit may be less obvious in daily life, especially in areas where a state sanctioned religion has gained prominence. His authority in non-ritual matters varies, and the daily affairs of the community are often in the hands of its administrative head (Ind. *kepala desa*, *lurah*) (cf. Hayami 2003, p. 140; De Josselin de Jong 1947, p. 26). However, this does not mean that the ritual leader is less important, at least not until relatively recently (Wessing 2013). While he is sometimes among the economically better off in the community (Hayami 2003, p. 140), he also often lives in a simple dwelling, sometimes near the fields, with little material evidence of his standing in the community. Yet, the whole community pays attention to what he does (Buijs 2006, p. 112),²² and even the decisions of the head of the village or wider area may need his approval (Van Wouden 1968, p. 29; Tichelman 1925, pp. 716–17). When a village becomes too large, daughter communities may be founded, but here too, at least at first, the influence of the original founding line continues to be felt. People usually know the name of the mother village²³ and, along with family ties, relationships with the tutelary spirit are long maintained (Ter Haar 1946, p. 82; Pemberton 1994, p. 243; cf. Hayami 2003, p. 138).

²¹ The Kanekes also have a person who liaises with the national government and the outside world, but he is quite secondary to the *pu'un*. Drabbe (1940, p. 150) reports from the island Tanembar that the position of (administrative) village head is unknown there. A descendant of the community's founder sees to daily affairs.

²² Compare the position of the Chau Phau in Thailand (Tambiah 1975, p. 265).

²³ Cf. Koloniaal Instituut IV-A 1918, p. 133, #404, #405.

5. Previous Inhabitants

The above account of a founder demarcating an area and creating a relationship with its spirit-owner is, of course, an ideal model. It does not take into consideration that others may have lived in the area before, having left because of a calamity like drought or war. Especially in the latter case the previous inhabitants may have disappeared, leaving behind only traces of their occupation. For example, when the hamlet Sagat (East Java) was founded, the incoming group found a grave there. Although the identity of the deceased was unknown, it was assumed that he or she was one of, or represented the original inhabitants of the place, and his/her spirit was pressed into service as that of the founder. Later someone received a *firasat* (mystical insight) that the deceased had been a *patih* (chief councillor) from the kingdom of Mataram, and that he had had two siblings whose graves are located respectively in Banyuwangi and in Macan Putih (both in East Java). Since this presumed founder is deceased, the current inhabitants of Sagat also have no way of knowing the name of their tutelary spirit. When the agricultural season gets underway, they just notify this presumptive founder and leave it to him to deal with the spirits. Informants, indeed, sometimes referred to him as a founder and at other times as the tutelary spirit, merging the two identities.²⁴

6. Backward Feet

A similar merging of previous inhabitants with the nature spirits is found in Northern Halmahera where, having lost their war with the sultans of Ternate, Tidore and Jailolo, the Moro inhabitants “‘walked backwards’ into the forest” (Platenkamp 2007, pp. 105, 116) when the Tobelo occupied their land.²⁵ They are said to occasionally show themselves, as if to

²⁴ This is found elsewhere as well (Schefold 2002, p. 428; Scholz 1962, p. 12; cf. Platenkamp 2007, p. 115), even as far a field as Madagascar where the Merina say that before the arrival of their ancestors, their territory was occupied by an autochthonous people who were the “masters of wild plants and animals” (Bloch 1985, p. 640).

²⁵ Similarly, the Nage of the island of Flores tell of wildmen (*ebu gogo*) whose description

remind the current residents that they, the Moro, used to rule there, even though they are now believed to have become one with the spirit world (Lapian 1987, p. 216; Berg 1955, p. 252), as was symbolized by their backwards movement. Elsewhere too being inverted or backwards indicates a link with the forces of nature and its powers (cf. Wessing 1986, pp. 84, 88, n. 8; Diamond 1998, p. 332). Similarly in Sulawesi, the name of the Toraja agricultural deity, Sumboli, is derived from *woli*, which means “turned about, ... backwards”. This deity walked “on reversed feet, with the foot soles on top. He also had horns on his knees” (Downs 1956, p. 25).

Actually, the merger of the previous or elder inhabitants with the spirit world seems to be part of a more general pattern. In Java, for instance, the elderly have the power to mete out supernatural punishment (*kuwalat*), indicating their increasing involvement with the spirit forces. In this regard it is interesting that the Houailon of north-east New Caledonia, which is part of the New Hebrides, an area that has cultural affinities with Southeast Asia (cf. Heine-Geldern 1923, p. 185), perceive of life as a “process of ‘becoming more spirit’, and the older one is, the more one sheds humanness” and takes on *bao* (the character of spirit) (Trompf 1995, p. 154). The merger or identification of the spirit of the founder with the tutelary spirit, which is often found throughout Southeast Asia, may also be seen as part of this pattern (Mus 1975; Schefold 2002, p. 430; cf. Bouman 1943, p. 491).²⁶

overlaps with their conception of *tuan tanah*-like nature spirits (*nitu*), especially the sub-category *noa*, although the two certainly are not identical. The *ebu gogo* were defeated by the Nage, and the partial overlap of the two categories could well reflect the *ebu gogo*’s merging with the spirit world – even though the *ebu gogo* are not said to be *tuan tanah* (Forth 1998, pp. 65, 80, 82, 98–99, 105, n. 9). It is tempting to link the *noa* and the *ebu gogo* with the remains of *Homo floresiensis* (the Flores Hobbit), but this idea remains disputed (Forth 2006).

²⁶ By burying the ancestors in the land and becoming one with it, the land as it were becomes the ancestor. This raises the question what the difference is between the ancestors and the original owning spirits, and may account for the merger with them. Indeed, long-ago ancestors are often indistinguishable from owning spirits (cf. Mus 1975). The Merina of Madagascar see the land as one with the people through the agency of their ancestors, who are buried in it and with whom the living are merged in a mystical unity (cf. Bloch 1985, pp. 635; 1986, pp. 168–69).

Having taken over the position of the previous inhabitants, the newcomers must take on the role of the founders, and fulfill the autochthonous people's obligations to the spirits by becoming the "guardians of customary law" (cf. Platenkamp 2007, p. 105). There also are cases where previous inhabitants of an area were absorbed by an incoming group, as has happened to the Lelak people of Sarawak, who were integrated into the Berawan (Metcalf 1982, p. 197), the latter continuing to use the Lelak's shamanic chants.²⁷ This suggests that the newcomers recognized the power of the prior position of the earlier inhabitants vis-à-vis the spirits addressed in these chants.

The autochthonous people, therefore, may be driven out, absorbed, or otherwise incorporated, but continue nevertheless to be associated with the wilderness and its forces, with which the newcomers must deal (cf. Platenkamp 2008, pp. 10–11). Having precedence in the area, they continue to be regarded as the Lords of the Land (Scholz 1962, p. 5; cf. Francis 1838, p. 27), and mediate between the newcomers and the spirits (Platenkamp 2007, p. 117). Without their cooperation fertility would not flow into the community.²⁸

7. Wider Authority

The final category that is often designated as Lords of the Land are the heads of territories encompassing more than one local community. This can include such figures as kings (*raja*, *ratu*) but also the heads of lineages (e.g. *marga*) and other larger territorial groupings. The literature is somewhat unclear on this point, and often speaks of *raja* without making clear what is meant by this term locally, which can vary considerably. In Indonesian and Malay, as well as in several other, local languages, *raja* means king or ruler, without further discussion of the size of this ruler's kingdom. In several local languages of

²⁷ I thank Dr Rosemary Gianno for calling this case to my attention.

²⁸ Platenkamp (2008, p. 9) characterizes relationship of the autochthonous peoples with the old Kingdom of Laos as life-giving and supporting the prosperity of the realm and the ruler's longevity.

Indonesia, however, the meaning of the term varies from village head, to lineage head, to ruler.²⁹

These positions are obviously not identical because, leaving aside the village head here, the cosmological positions of a lineage head and a king, while the territories under their control may not differ much in size, are rather different. A lineage head may well have gained authority over a large area as a result of local expansion due to natural growth, leading to the founding of daughter communities and the expansion of the original contract with the local tutelary spirit. Such daughter communities then often tend to form clusters with their community of origin, in which the daughter community continues to maintain ritual ties with the tutelary spirit of the community from which it sprang (cf. Hayami 2003, p. 138). A lineage head, therefore, can be seen as representing the founder of the original community (see e.g. Bertling 1955, p. 37), and consequently assume the role of Lord of the Land. Thus Holleman (1923, pp. 23–25) writes of Hitu (Ambon) that the lineage head (*stamhoofd*), who is addressed as *upu aman (tuan tanah)*, has a major voice in agrarian affairs and matters of custom (*adat*), and often has greater authority than the village head. He represents the extended descent group or family of the founder of the community. Similarly, Coville (2003, pp. 87, 105) notes that the *indo padang* or mothers of the land of the Toraja, who “mediate between the living community and the ‘spirits of the land’”, must be “of noble birth”, without defining what constitutes noble birth: the Toraja *raja kampung* is a village head. This also seems to be true of the Malays of Sumatra (Koloniaal Instituut IV-A 1918, p. 107, #333).

²⁹ For the Toba Batak (North Sumatra) Warneck (1977, p. 195) translates it as king (*Fürst*) but then also uses the gloss headman (*Häuptling*). In Ambon and among the Toraja, *raja* is the title used for a village head (Takaria and Pieter 1998, p. 113; Tammu and van der Veen 1972, p. 455), while among the Pakpak (North Sumatra) the term can indicate anything from government in general to the members of the lineage (*marga*) in power (Manik 1977, p. 245). In Aceh, furthermore, it can be used for the king or the sultan, and for the *uléëbalang*, the autochthonous leaders with whose consent the king rules (see below) (Djajadiningrat 1934, p. 460; Kreemer 1931, p. 245). Among the Minangkabau, finally, *raja* also seems to be used for a variety of positions (Saydam 2004, p. 307).

Kings, on the other hand, are often said to have come from elsewhere, and are either a prince or man with great powers on a quest for a territory of his own, which he carves out of the wilderness, or one who is invited by a local population to become their ruler (cf. De Josselin de Jong 1965, p. 285; 1980, p. 3; Bellwood 1996, pp. 18–19).

Examples of the first kind are found in the foundational myths of several kingdoms in Java, and the establishment of a kingdom in Cambodia by an immigrant prince (Gaudes 1993). In Java, for instance, the kingdom of Pajang was founded on the basis of a deed of wilderness land that had to be cleared by the prospective ruler (Olthof 1987, p. 65), e.g. there is no mention of a pre-existing village population that invited the ruler to become king. The new ruler and his following had to clear the forest and face its dangers, and thus enter into an agreement with the local spirit-owner.³⁰ Most famous is the case of Panembahan Senapati, the founder of the kingdom of Mataram, a successor state to Pajang and ancestral to the Sultanates of Yogyakarta and Surakarta. In his quest for his own kingdom, Panembahan Senapati meditated in various wilderness areas, gaining supernatural powers, before eventually coming to the shore of the Indian Ocean. There his meditations attracted the attention of Nyai Rara Kidul, the Queen of the Sprits and Goddess of the Southern Ocean. They are said to have made love for three days and nights in her underwater palace, during which time she also instructed him in the arts of statecraft and kingship. After this experience Senapati returned to land and founded his kingdom in Mataram (Olthof 1987, pp. 80–82).³¹ His lover, the Queen, who is often depicted as a *nāgini*, promised the aid of her spirit forces when this realm is threatened.

³⁰ The site of the court of Yogyakarta, which was founded in the eighteenth century, was located in the forest of Bringan, a place inhabited by many wild animals (Adam 1940, p. 187).

³¹ Hayami (2003, p. 144) writes of “a person with supernatural power returning as the new central figure, adopting legitimizing power sources from the world beyond the forest”. In a more Islamic context, the future ruler “defeats” the *nāgini*, Islam obviously not recognizing any source of fertility other than God (cf. Winstedt 1926, pp. 414–16).

The various versions of the Cambodian myth are quite similar to this tale of Senapati and the Queen (cf. Gaudes 1993, p. 335; Wessing in press). They relate how Prince Phreah Thaong arrives at an island in the ocean where he marries a Naga princess whom he finds there, bathing. After their marriage her father, the Nāga King, constructs a kingdom for them in Cambodia (or elsewhere causes it to rise out of the waters) (Gaudes 1993, pp. 334–35). In both cases, then, the founder of the kingdom enters a marriage (or sexual) relationship with a spirit being that rules the waters. It is only after this relationship has been established that they succeeded in founding their kingdoms.

In these cases, the relationship between the ruler and his realm's tutelary spirit is much like that between a village founder and the local spirit owner of the land, except that in the ruler's case the relationship has a sexual as well as a contractual aspect, while the village founder's is strictly contractual. In both cases, however, the relationship must be renewed, time and again; in the case of the village through an annual feasting, and in the case of the ruler through continued cohabitation with the water-princess. Even the current Sultan of Yogyakarta is said to still maintain relations with the Southern Ocean's Queen (Wessing 2003, p. 231; Tempo 1989, p. 71).

How such a ruler subsequently attracted villagers to become his subjects is not mentioned in the annals. One drawing point must have been the protection offered by the state, isolated villages often being subject to the predation of bandits. This protection, translated as the king's supernatural endowment (Jav: *kasektèn*) that made protective spirits willing to submit to him, would have been preferable to the ravages of either bandits or the king's own forces. Furthermore, although it became difficult to extract oneself once one was part of the system, groups of people could leave for the hills if the king's demands became too onerous, or his protection ineffective (Schulte Nordholt 1991, p. 475).

The second type of king is the one discussed by De Josselin de Jong, in which a prince from outside the area is invited to become a ruler in an already established community, e.g. in a community the founder of which had already entered into a relationship with the local tutelary spirit. In order to assume this position, the potential ruler must marry

a local woman (De Josselin de Jong 1980, p. 6). This, furthermore, cannot be just any woman, but must be one from the local founding line (De Josselin de Jong 1980, p. 7; 1986, pp. 220–21; Jordaan and De Josselin de Jong 1985, p. 254). He must also marry her under the proper circumstances, e.g. by following the rules and rituals that, as was discussed earlier, are part of the custom (*adat*) of that location (Bertling 1955, p. 26; cf. Heinschke 2010, p. 110). We may see such a marriage as at once a relationship between the king and the local woman, and, through her also with the tutelary spirit that represents the local forces of nature and fertility.³² Both the founding line and the tutelary spirit, then, act as wife-givers to the ruler, and, indeed, the wife-giving founding line, because of its relationship with the tutelary spirit, is the “point of access” to the fertility and welfare that flow from these spirits (Schefold 2002, p. 431). Given the merger of the autochthonous people with the spirits, the ruler literally marries his realm (cf. Snouck Hurgronje 1906, p. 132; Berg 1951, pp. 494, 510; Falk 1973, p. 2; Schnepel 1955, p. 149; Hara 1973), and, since title to the land is retained by the spirits as represented by the autochthonous chiefs, the ruler, as wife-taker, must defer to his wife-givers, the local leaders (Bertling 1955, p. 28; Schefold 2002, p. 422).³³ While the immigrant king is the source of the ruling line, Barendregt (2005, p. 274) observes, access to land remains in the hands of the autochthonous

³² Bakels (2000, p. 173) seems to confuse the founding of a village and the founding of a kingdom, writing that relations between village and forest follow a pan-Indonesian pattern in which an immigrant-hero from a powerful kingdom of Sumatra's past, enters into a mystical marriage with a woman of the forest. As we saw, this is true of the immigrant ruler or stranger-king, but not necessarily so of village founders. On the other hand, the sexual aspect of the founder's relationship with the female tutelary spirit should not be underestimated. The Using of eastern-most Java characterize first sexual relations between newlyweds as *babad alas, masuk guwa* (clear the forest [and] enter the cave), calling the woman's *mons veneris* her *hutan larangan* (forbidden forest, e.g. home of the female tutelary spirit; cf. Wessing 1999b, pp. 66–67), which likens the wedding night to a first penetration or clearing of a virginal forest.

³³ In Bali the *pasek*, the Lord of the Land of a village was the representative of the king, charged with guarding his village (Korn 1932, p. 195). This, of course, was his task vis-à-vis the spirits in any case.

community who, therefore, are the human Lords of the Land, based on their contract with the tutelary spirit (cf. Sahlins 2008, p. 183).³⁴

In Central Timor the king has the title of “lord of the earth”, which is also the title given to the local tutelary spirits, indicating a unity between them. The Timorese king, furthermore, makes use of altars that are said to have existed since the country was founded and to have been raised by the original inhabitants. When the king makes offerings at these he must do so in the presence of the original inhabitants (Bertling 1955, p. 33; cf. Barendregt 2005, p. 247, n. 43).³⁵ In Laos, similarly, the hill people represent the autochthonous inhabitants, and are said to have spiritual connections, or to have turned into spirits.³⁶ These hill people represent the court in the making of offerings during the New Year’s rituals that assure the welfare of the realm, especially through the water that irrigates the fields (Platenkamp 2007, pp. 116–17; 2008, pp. 10–11; cf. Sahlins 2008, p. 192).³⁷ In the case of the “founder-king”, on the other hand, his relationship is directly with a powerful tutelary spirit, which, as is evident from Nyai Rara Kidul’s title of Queen of the Spirits, outranks the local fertility spirits that reside in her domain. Once his kingship was established, this second type of ruler would have

³⁴ Hall (1999, p. 213) observes that “Javanese monarchs did not normally have local land rights, and even their tax rights were subject to social restraint”. Such rights remained with the local founding line, and the ruler’s income came from commerce, making it unnecessary for him “to confront the foundation of local autonomy and prosperity” by making demands on local agricultural produce (Hall 1999, p. 222).

³⁵ In Bali local custom was dominant to the degree that people in villages that had always had their own spiritual leaders often rejected the services of Hindu priests (Korn 1932, p. 165).

³⁶ Jos Platenkamp (personal communication) notes that the autochthonous people in Laos do not offer the king “community”. Rather, the king, through his royal gaze, socialized the autochthonous people, making them visible to the outside world.

³⁷ In return the king clothed, advised and took care of the families of the hill people (Platenkamp 2007, pp. 116–17). This is reminiscent of the Kanekes of Banten, who annually visit the regent in Serang (West Java), bringing him evidence of the continued fertility of the realm of the old kingdom of Pajajaran. During this visit, the Kanekes’ demeanour and speech indicate a level of familiarity and equality with the regent, rather than the hierarchical relationship that this official has vis-à-vis the common people of West Java (Wessing and Barendregt 2005, pp. 12–13).

faced the same constraints as the first: he had to show the advantages of his presence or risk losing his subjects.

To summarize, an immigrant king can only be a Lord of the Land by extension. As long as he rules well, maintains peace and tranquility, and fulfils his covenant with the autochthonous population (Winstedt 1926, p. 418; De Josselin de Jong 1980, p. 7), they, “acting on behalf of the spiritual owners of the autochthonous fertility” offer him gifts symbolic of fruits, marriage and healing, e.g. fertility and community (Platenkamp 2007, p. 117). In return he gives them security and welfare and treats them with the deference due to the older, founding people (Bertling 1955, p. 28).³⁸

8. Femaleness

We note then that a connection with either an autochthonous woman or with the local (female) tutelary spirit (or both) is crucial in establishing the ruler’s position (cf. Schrieke 1957, p. 14, citing Djajadiningrat).³⁹ At this point we must take a further look at femaleness and fertility as aspects of the tutelary spirit. As we have seen, in both the Javanese and Cambodian cases the spirit that is responsible for, or perhaps the reification of, the fertility of the land, is thought to be female and to incarnate as a snake (*nāginī*) (Pleyte 1894, pt. 1, p. 99; Wessing 1997, p. 321; Singaravelu 1969, p. 5; Gaudes 1993, pp. 334, 339, 346). The line dividing spirits and autochthonous women is also rather vague in Buijs’ (2006, pp. 17–19) account in which an immigrant ancestor meets and marries a human woman that emerges from the waters (= a spirit being) (cf. Heinschke 2010, p. 109).

³⁸ Jos Platenkamp (personal communication) suggests that the “royal gaze” socializes the autochthonous people and in so doing makes them visible.

³⁹ The association of tutelary spirits with autochthonous women works in reverse as well, and such a woman may be “depicted as a kind of spirit of the wilderness” assuming the form of “wild and dangerous animals”. Immigrant peoples must acknowledge the autochthones’ spiritual connection with nature in order to use the fertility of the area (Schefold 2002, p. 423).

The female-snake feature that we saw playing a central role in the Javanese and Cambodian kingdoms is an important aspect of village tutelary spirits as well. For instance, one Central Javanese community's tutelary spirit is a snake that incarnates as an old woman and is associated with the village well. Another came in the shape of a white eel (Pemberton 1994, p. 263). Tutelary spirits, Pemberton continues, are most often associated with water sources such as wells, springs, pools and rivers, or with trees (cf. Jawa Pos 2008c, p. 11). They are strongly associated with fertility and with autochthonous women (Wessing 1997, p. 321, n. 12; cf. Schefold 2002, p. 423). In Sulawesi, too, in rituals connected with fertility and welfare, the spirit-owners of the land are represented by a woman, the *toburake*, who is closely associated with water and the forest and its spirits (Buijs 2006, pp. 45–46, 140). Among the Kanekes of South Banten, also, this tutelary spirit is said to be female. Here her marriage to the community's founder is thought to be the source of the fertility of the land (Jacobs and Meijer 1891, p. 37). In predominantly Islamic Java, on the other hand, the founder of a local village community does not marry the tutelary spirit. Rather, theirs is a contractual relationship in which the spirit, in return for a guarantee of good crops and welfare, is or was honoured with an annual feast.⁴⁰

Clearly, both founder-rulers and village-founders, by their act of clearing the forest to build either a palace or establish a settlement, are intruders into the sphere of the spirits. Immigrant rulers are so by extension through their marriage alliance with both the original founder and his spirit allies. Yet, whereas founders retain their male aspect in their contractual relationship with the female spirits, an immigrant ruler, because of his position as wife-taker at the centre, is categorized with his wife and comes to be classified, sometimes only subtly so, as symbolically female vis-à-vis the elder or autochthonous founders (Cunningham 1965, p. 367). This may be expressed in their demeanour. For instance, in Java the king, especially when making a public appearance, must be passive, calm and contained, staring ahead without expression, “expressing his

⁴⁰ Whether these celebrations continue and in what form depends on the community's relationship with Islam (see Wessing 2013; Beatty 2009).

power through ascetic equanimity” (Minard 2012, p. 6; cf. Wessing 2003, p. 234). In neighbouring Bali, being passive, calm, and contained is part of a female behavioural style (Parker 1997, p. 506), casting an aura of femininity on the ruler’s ideal “style” (*gaya*) (cf. Coville 2003, pp. 98–99; Beatty 2009, p. 145; Ross 2009, p. 18; Sahlin 1981, p. 122).

Kingship, then, is based on the ruler’s contract with the autochthonous inhabitants of his realm, either human or spirit or both (cf. Wessing 2003, p. 205). This is realized through his marriage with a woman of the local founding lineage and the local tutelary spirit, or, as in the case of Javanese Panembahan Senapati, through his direct alliance with a superior spirit. In either case the spirit, as Wolters (1982, p. 102) writes, recognizes and is attracted to the ruler’s superior spiritual qualities,⁴¹ and places itself at his disposal (cf. Olthof 1987, p. 82). It may well be that the presence of a king in a community also reflects upon the local tutelary spirit. Having been able to attract such a powerful person increases the spirit’s power and prestige.⁴² However, since the autochthonous inhabitants must already have had a relationship with this spirit, the ruler’s superiority can only be a matter of degree, especially since fertility continues to be a matter of local concern in individual communities. The basic relationship here is between the ruler and the autochthonous elders, based on “cosmologically sanctioned contracts” between them.⁴³ Such a relationship must periodically be renewed through “ritual transactions” (Platenkamp 2013), such as the Kanekes’ visit to the regent at Serang mentioned earlier.

⁴¹ He is often said to have shamanistic qualities (Winstedt 1945, pp. 135–37). In Panembahan Senapati’s case these qualities were demonstrated through his powerful meditation. In several Malay and Sumatran cases the new ruler is said to be a descendant of Alexander the Great, a testament to his superior ancestry (Winstedt 1926, pp. 415, 417).

⁴² As Mus (1975, pp. 29–31) writes, some Hindu gods often manifest as earth or fertility spirits that “have succeeded brilliantly”. Similarly, it was after Panembahan Senapati’s marriage with Nyai Rara Kidul that this fisherman’s protective spirit began to move in palace circles (Wessing 2006b, pp. 48–49; 2007, pp. 532–33; in press). On the other hand, ordinary peoples’ relationships with these spirits often end in disaster (Wessing 1988, p. 54; 2007, pp. 534–35).

⁴³ Winstedt (1926, p. 418) writes that the autochthonous leader “promises that his family will never show treachery to [the ruler] ... or his descendants, so long as they never put him or his descendants to shame”.

9. Systemic Stress

The picture I have sketched thus far of the relationship between a ruler and the heads of the communities making up his realm is, of course, an ideal one, in which both parties live up to each other's expectations. In practice things do not always go so smoothly because it is, in the final analysis, a question of power and the control over, and the disposition of resources. Especially when a ruler gains renown, it may be tempting for him to expect to get his way when setting policies that affect local communities. These, however, as we saw earlier, have their own relationship with their various tutelary spirits to consider. Local welfare and tranquility, we remember, depend on the adherence to the local custom (*adat*), which grew out of the agreement between the founder and the tutelary spirit and is, it must be emphasized again, part of the locality itself (cf. Hefner 2011, p. 79).⁴⁴

Yet the ruler has his own relationship with his realm's tutelary spirit (Wessing 2003, pp. 204–5; Wessing and Barendregt 2005, p. 13), a spirit that has gained in stature with the rise of the ruler's *pamor* (luster, prestige) (cf. Mus 1975, pp. 29–31). This has on occasion led to a contest of wills, especially where the autochthonous leaders traditionally had a great degree of autonomy in dealing with affairs in their local areas. Illustrative here are the tensions between the Sultan of Aceh and his *ulëëbalang*,⁴⁵ whose support was needed for the Sultan to occupy his office. In cases of succession, these *ulëëbalang* helped determine who would be chosen

⁴⁴ Beatty (2012, p. 184) seems to see the scattered local particularism that he found in Using East Java as due to the absence of a *kraton* or exemplary centre, a consequence of the contests for this area in the late eighteenth century. Thus “power was — and is — dispersed among sacred locations ... and among semi-historical figures ... and their shrines access is controlled by *dukun*, caretakers and mystics able to tap the circuits and manipulate the relics for contemporary meanings”. While the disappearance of the centre may well have exacerbated the situation, it likely was not its primary cause as the local particularism preceded the troubles, and is inherent in the situation in which each locality has its own tutelary spirit and associated local customs.

⁴⁵ Amin (1982, p. 11) defines these *ulëëbalang* as *raja-raja kecil*, which one might at first be tempted to translate as “kings of small states”. However, bearing in mind Djajadiningrat's (1934, p. 460) gloss of *landschapshoofd* (head of a region or district), it is probably more appropriate to see them as equivalent to the heads lineages or *marga* elsewhere.

to be the next Sultan. At the same time, their position as local leaders needed to be legitimized by a letter of appointment from the Sultan. While in theory there was a balance between them, many *uléëbalang* would have preferred to remain independent (Amin 1982, pp. 10–11). This balance between the Sultan and the *uléëbalang* depended primarily on the strength of the personalities involved, and strategic murders of *uléëbalang* that opposed the will of the Sultan were not unknown (Amin 1982, p. 12). The outcome of a clash of wills between them may well, among other things, have influenced who could legitimately bear the title of Lord of the Land. The same was often true of the relationship between rulers and autochthonous heads elsewhere. Thus Gullick (1958, p. 44) writes that in most nineteenth-century Malay states, the ruler did not “embody any exceptional concentration of administrative authority” but rather symbolized and preserved the unity of the state. “Powerful district chiefs could and sometimes did flout his wishes with impunity” (Gullick 1958, p. 44). Tambiah (2013, p. 517) indeed differentiates between the exceptional stronger form of the state and the “more usual” weaker form, in which real competition existed between the ruler and the chiefs who, as Gullick (1958, p. 44) writes, often were wealthier than the ruler. The ruler in the latter cases was the symbolic glue that held things together: he was the source of titles, regalia, and privileges (Tambiah 2013, p. 518).

As was pointed out earlier, the ruler must show himself to be a person of excellence. One way to achieve this status is, of course, by providing security through force of arms: the ruler possesses superior physical qualities, which he then parlays into political advantage (cf. Sahlins 1981, p. 115). In this case the local leaders can still claim precedence based on their relationship with the tutelary spirit, while the ruler does so based on his physical might (cf. Sahlins 2008, p. 184). This is an uncertain way to gain a superior position, however, as one can never be certain of the ultimate loyalty of the forces that support one’s position.

Another way, perhaps in combination with physical might, is for the ruler to proclaim himself to be an adherent of a more powerful religion,⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Or to himself become a god (Sahlins 1981, p. 119).

one without ties to local spirits, or which subsumes local spirits and deities into its cosmology, either as followers of the new god, or as opposing devils.⁴⁷ If the ruler (or his proselytizers) manages to convince the people to also convert to the new religion, he places himself in a morally superior position, while at the same time weakening the ritual position of the autochthonous leaders that was the basis of his kingship to begin with. After all, one of the ruler's duties is to bring order and civilization to his realm, and a cosmology, even a new one, is one way of accomplishing this (cf. McVey 1993, p. 10). As Bowen (1995, p. 1066) writes of contemporary Southeast Asia, people in marginal areas are increasingly "pressured to convert to the center's religions", e.g. to acknowledge the superiority of the rulers' cosmology to the detriment of their own, sometimes under pressure from a "new [approved] class of religious authorities" (Hornbacher 2011, pp. 168, 170; Hefner 2011, pp. 80–81).⁴⁸ It might even be posited that when the ruler and the local founding lines adhere to the same religious doctrine, the likelihood of a power-conflict between them is reduced, though not fully eliminated. Where they work from different assumptions, e.g. when the state's claim to power is based on a different cosmology, the likelihood of conflict may well increase. The people's task, McVey (1993, p. 10) observes, "is to be instructed and obey", which is all well and good

⁴⁷ For example, whereas the Javanese ruler Penembahan Senapati was warned early in his rise to power not to rely on his *sekti* (e.g. the Goddess Nyai Rara Kidul mentioned earlier) (Olthof 1987, p. 82), by the middle of the eighteenth century the goddess is said to have told the Javanese to read the Koran and pray to Allah (Ricklefs 1974b, p. 203). During the Java War (1825–30) this goddess encouraged Prince Dipanegara to adopt the name Ngabdulhamid (Servant of God) (Wachtel 1977, p. 20). Many Indonesian spirits, furthermore, came to be reclassified as *jinn*, some of whom had entered the Islamic faith while others remain obdurate. Which is which, and whether any dealings with spirits are valid at all, is an ongoing discussion among different factions of Islam in Indonesia.

⁴⁸ I take exception to classifying many of these people as marginal, since even urban villagers are faced with this dilemma. It is more a matter of the relevance of the teachings to one's immediate concerns. Hefner (2011, p. 80) paints a rather negative picture of the decline of these traditions, seeming to disregard their strength at the private level. In my own research I have found the tradition ongoing, although its public performance has declined in the face of normative Islam (Wessing 2013), while some aspects of it are being islamized.

except that the centre's deities are often more concerned with transcendent matters like the afterlife, and have little to say about this year's food crop or relief from local calamities: the "divine power" concentrated at the centre (Sahlins 2008, p. 190) is of a different nature than that which has been relevant to the people. The "transformation of local traditions (*adat*) into a universalist religious doctrine" (Hornbacher 2011, p. 183) therefore tends to disenfranchise the local spirits upon whose goodwill local communities feel themselves to depend.

Thus, for solutions to their daily problems local people continue to varying degrees to rely on the goodwill of their familiar old spirits and ancestors, even if these have come to more or less be integrated into the centre's faith (cf. Wessing 2010; 2013; 2016). Pemberton (1994, p. 341) sees these local spirits as becoming "marginalized in deference to God", but it is perhaps more accurate to see spirits and gods as aspects of each other, the emphasized accent depending on the nature and context of the occasion (Wessing 2010; cf. Bowen 1995, p. 1054).⁴⁹ Locally, then, spirits and ancestors continue to have some power, and are thus able to challenge the claims of the centre (see Chambert-Loir and Reid 2002). In any case, the ruler himself must also continue to rely on the goodwill of his realm's tutelary deity, no matter how the latter is presented. Thus we read of candidates for a position at various levels visiting the graves of their predecessors (De Jonge 2008, p. 115; Surya 2004, p. 4; Jawa Pos 2009, p. 12), hoping for this deceased's blessing on their effort to gain the position.

The modern state furthermore, aside from its recognition of a superior religion that in theory supersedes local beliefs, also challenges the traditional relationship by denying the role of tutelary spirits, and recognizing no alternative to its own authority. The state lays claim to a defined territory that includes all local areas as well as forests (the home of many spirits) (Hayami 2003, pp. 136–37). The impact of these claims by the state on the position of the Lord of the Land varies. In Buddhist Thailand, Hayami (2003, p. 136) writes, the state attempts to "Thai-ize" the

⁴⁹ Often the tutelary deity, the current God, and various protective spirits tend to merge in people's perceptions anyway (cf. Wessing 2010, pp. 72–73).

hill populations among whom the tradition persists. This is done through the introduction of Buddhism, as well as through resettlement programmes and, occasionally, by military force. Elsewhere, in e.g. predominantly Muslim Indonesia, there has recently been a strong and persistent effort to eliminate unorthodox beliefs and practices, especially those involving the claims of local spirits. This has led to social stress, especially when these priorities of the government and religious councils run counter to local convictions (Wessing 2016; Jawa Pos 2008*a*, p. 31; 2008*b*, p. 31; 2008*d*, p. 32; cf. Pemberton 1994, pp. 239–40). One government tactic has been to define traditional ritual events as appropriate for the tourist gaze, which has led to changes in, and the secularization of the rituals (Aryanti 2007; Volkman 1990; cf. Platenkamp 2008, pp. 8–9, 18–20).

Yet, other than its ability to enforce its claims through modern arms and political and religious pressure, the state's dilemma today does not differ that much from previous times. Then too the ruler, if he were to effectively tax and make claims on the areas over which he claimed suzerainty, somehow had to prove that he was a proper ruler, and that his rule benefited his subject people. This hopefully gave him the moral authority to assert that the state's tutelary spirit outranked local ones, and thus that demands and instructions from above outweighed local priorities. The outcome of such an evaluation influenced the degree to which the autochthonous leaders either retained their own authority in matters dealing with the spirits, or saw themselves, as in the Kanekes example, as stewards of the land and representatives of the ruler in their villages (Koloniaal Instituut IV-A 1918, p. 103, #317).

To summarize, traditionally the land was seen as owned by the spirits with whom the founder had entered into a contractual relationship through which he and his descendants gained authority over the land and the right to determine who could use it. These rights lay with the community and not with the individuals (cf. Ter Haar 1946, pp. 54–59; Koloniaal Instituut IV-A 1918, p. 109, #342; Barendregt 2005, p. 274; Hayami 2003, p. 134). Individual ownership would, indeed, have been impossible. This in effect created a second layer of authority over the land, namely the one relating to day-to-day affairs, which was in the hands of the community's leadership, the Lords of the

Land.⁵⁰ This authority, however, was always seen as contingent on the spirits' goodwill. As the community succeeded and grew, leading to the founding of daughter communities, the founding line gained greater prestige and authority over a wider area, although their relationship with the tutelary spirits did not change much: the contractual obligations still had to be met.

The adoption of an outside ruler, a "stranger king" (cf. Sahlin 1981; 2008), added a third layer of authority. Like the relationship between the founding line and the tutelary spirits, this one too was a contractual one, although this time between the ruler and the founding line, expressed through the marriage of the ruler with an autochthonous woman who symbolically represented the tutelary spirit. In some cases, as we have seen, the autochthonous woman was skipped and the ruler entered into a direct sexual relationship with a powerful spirit. Yet, in either case he was obliged to carry out the terms of the contract if his realm were to prosper and flourish. In this sense then, the positions of the ruler, the lineage head, and the founder tend to telescope: they are but ever grander, more powerful versions of the original position, yet always dependent on the original relationship between the tutelary spirit and the founder.

10. Conclusion

The foregoing discussion has highlighted a pattern, a cultural matrix, that underlies power relationships both within communities and between local communities and the traditional state in much of "Southeast Asia" and beyond. Focusing on the social categories often associated with the title Lord of the Land, namely the owning spirit(s), the founders of communities and their descendants, and the king, it has been shown that

⁵⁰ Bartholo (1864, p. 16) writes that the human *tuan tanah* is sometimes erroneously called the owner of the land (*landeigenaar*), and that it would be more appropriate to call him the lord of the land (*landheer*). This, however, begs the question because according to Koenen and Drewes (1982, p. 726), Geerts and Heestermans (1992, p. 1618), and Martin and Tops (1994, p. 747) the *landheer* is respectively the owner of a farmstead, the owner of the land, and the Lord of the Manor.

the significance lies not in these positions themselves, but rather in the nature of the relationships among them; rather than being independent, these positions are contingent and stand in an ordinal relation to each other. While the claims of the spirits are seen as primordial, and thus indisputable, they are irrelevant until someone wants to found a community in a spirit's territory. At that time the rights of the spirits come to be juxtaposed to the wishes of the founder, and a relationship between them must be established if the founder's endeavours are to succeed. The claims of the founder and his descendants, and of the ruler, therefore, are based on contractual relations between a (usually) male "invader" and the symbolically female spirit-force to whom the fertility of the land is attributed. Where there were previous human inhabitants of the area, these tend to be assimilated to the category of the spirits. This is also true of the category of the autochthones vis-à-vis an incoming ruler.

The relationship being a contractual one, the owning spirits are seen as ambiguous: they are at once the source of the community's welfare, and a source of uncertainty. As Kris Lehman characterizes them (Wessing 2006a, p. 23, n. 19), "worse than merely touchy, they are Lords, and hence they are arbitrary, self-satisfied, temperamental, prone to sudden anger and so on".

An in-coming ruler can also be a source of tension, as the question of a balance of power and authority between the ruler in the centre and the local power holders must be negotiated. A ruler's claim to a superior cosmology, e.g. an imported religion or, these days, appeals to science and modernity, can only alleviate this problem if significant portions of the citizenry follow him in more or less fully adopting the new world-view, and if allowance can be made for those who persist in the old ways. To the degree to which this succeeds the situation remains relatively free of stress, but where emphasis is placed on a literal following of the dictates of the new cosmology, difficulties usually ensue (cf. Wessing 2002; Beatty 1999).

Even in the absence of an alternate cosmology, however, a potential for stress remains in the system. While the ruler can make demands based on his superior cosmological position, and that of the tutelary spirit of his realm, local communities remain dependent of the goodwill of their

local tutelary spirits, and these do not always approve of the changes and demands made by the ruler at the centre (Wessing 2016). The ruler, then, is often also both a source of welfare and of danger, just like the tutelary spirits are. No wonder that the Atoni of Timor place the king and the spirits in the same category (Bertling 1955, p. 33).

In closing, the system that includes the spirits, previous inhabitants, present inhabitants, and rulers is a recursive one, in which the symbolically female centre progressively encompasses all categories, and in which entities become relatively more male as one moves outward from the centre. Yet, in the end the system folds in upon itself as the ruler displays his “dual state” (Platenkamp 2008, p. 13): he merges with the spirits to at once exhibit female characteristics in his position as wife-taker to the autochthons and in his position in the centre, but male ones in his power relationships beyond his realm (cf. Wessing 1990, p. 251), including the forest to which he continues to stand in an ambiguous relationship. Finally, variations on the pattern described here can also be found in other parts of Asia and, following Abalahin (2011), may be fruitfully explored in a comparative Austronesian perspective.

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